

The Role of Creative Art in Community Education -  
Art Education and Art Therapy

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Ada Wightmore

October 1979



The Abstract of a Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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Title: The role of creative art in community education - art education and art therapy.

The thesis looks firstly at creativity and the creative process, approaching the subject from a whole range of different viewpoints, such as the psychological, philosophical, biographical and anthropological angles. Following from this there is an exploration of the ways in which creativity may be awakened and unfolded. Special attention is given to the conditions and situations that are likely to encourage creative development and to the blocks and difficulties that inhibit its expression. Particular reference is made, on the one hand, to art education and to the art, leisure, and teaching student, and on the other hand, to art therapy and the psychiatric patient. The themes of the individual and the community are explored in a complementary way in the final two chapters.

The thesis emphasizes the viewpoint of the student and the patient, but since these people do not exist in a vacuum, this involves looking also at the teacher, the therapist and society. With reference to the psychiatric field, other specific questions arise, for example: How may creative opportunities assist the healing process? What are the reciprocal influences of art and mental illness?

Throughout the thesis the term 'art' is used in the visual sense, but references are made to creativity in other fields where parallel conclusions apply. The emphasis has been placed on the adult, but the subject of 'Creativity and the Teaching Student' involves some references to child art and 'Creativity and the Community' involves all ages.

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\* Approximately 40% of the illustrations were photographed from paintings in the Audio-Visual Department of the University of Salford.

## Introduction

There are a number of reasons why creativity and the encouragement of its unfolding are important.

There is of course the obvious value to the individual in terms of the enrichment of personal life and the giving of a deeper meaning to the human situation.

There is also the importance of creativity for society. Creative people require and may demand freedom and the opportunity for nonconformity. If there are a number of individuals so motivated in a society it will be that much harder for dictatorships and all forms of oppressive and hierarchical regimes - whether of the right or the left - to maintain a lasting hold.

Sometimes highly creative persons who are prepared to go out on a limb for what they believe are regarded as eccentric, wild or even mad; however, they are really a safeguard against what might be called the pathology of conformity.

In our own century, for example, over and over again the nightmare of what can happen to people in police states and military style systems has been shown only too clearly.

Words such as torture, curfew, barbed wire, political censorship and disappearances come readily to mind: At the Bluecoat Gallery in Liverpool the sculpture of Marisa Rueda from Latin America was on show. (June, 1978) At first one felt a reaction of horror that what looked like a butcher's shop was on display - only there were parts of the human body that seemed to cry out in agony. Then gradually it was realised that sometimes art has to be like that. What else can art be about when people disappear from the streets! Ultimately the artist has to attempt to produce a reaction against hate.

## CHAPTER I

CREATIVITY - with reference to the psychological,  
philosophical, biographical, historical and  
anthropological and educational viewpoints



## Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the nature of creativity. It expresses a theoretically inclined exploration of the concept; and should be seen as a foundation prior to the consideration of the process in its educational and therapeutic context.

A special problem arises in considering creativity in relation to education: It is often associated with genius, and the genius is by definition a very rare type of person, possessing unusual mental powers and exceptional combinations of personal qualities leading towards a dedicated life style. Although education may be very interested in providing the best conditions for the growth of such an individual, it must also be open to democratic procedures.

The steepness of the straight path is prohibitive to most people. But there is another way of considering creativity, there is the spiral route. This opens out great possibilities to the majority and therefore is of special meaning to the educationalist. This diffuse kind of creativity is the tendency to do anything creatively. It is concerned with the joy of expression, adventure, experimentation and delight. The product itself may be of only relative importance, sometimes an improvisation. Creativity in this sense is associated with a level of awareness. It is most developed in what A.H. Maslow describes as the self-actualizing person. <sup>1</sup>

Some people object to the use of the term creativity in this sense. D.P. Ausubel, for example, says that the truly creative person is much rarer than the intelligent person and there is something qualitatively different about such a person. He takes the view that the creative traits are only supportive correlates of creativity. If the democratic idea is taken too far it leads to a watered down version that becomes meaningless. <sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, C.R. Rogers speaks of creativity as an important outcome of the ideal educational and therapeutic process: This person, he says: "With his sensitive openness to the world, his trust of his own ability to form new relationships with his environment, he would be the type of person from whom creative products and creative living emerge." <sup>3</sup>

This is an important aspect of Roger's fully functioning person.

In this chapter, the psychological viewpoint is concerned with creative traits and the creative process, with brainstorming and Synectics; reference is made to the physiological basis of creativity and to psychedelic experience; the philosophical viewpoint is concerned with perception, Eastern philosophy, the creative unconscious, cosmic art, occultism and also freedom; the biographical approach focuses on Van Gogh and Paul Klee; the section dealing with historical and anthropological perspectives turns to the Mandala and Great Goddess archetypes and to the art of the Pacific Northwest and finally, the educational viewpoint hints at the process of teaching along creative lines.

The somewhat abrupt juxtaposition of contrasting themes relating to creativity is intentional.



## The Traits associated with Creativity

There would seem to be a cluster of traits associated with creativity. The criteria have been researched by such people as V. Lowenfeld, J.P. Guilford, A.J. Cropley and E.P. Torrance. 4

The most important factors may be summarised as follows:

1. Sensitivity. This is linked with awareness, curiosity, perception and the ability to think beyond the stereotyped response.
2. Fluency. This is often divided into verbal, associational, expressional and ideational fluency. Perhaps the latter is the most important. Attempts have been made to test it by asking a person to produce ideas to fulfill certain requirements in a limited time. The naming, for example, of objects that are hard, white and edible or giving various uses for the common brick.
3. Flexibility. This is associated with ideational fluency, since rigidity of thought acts like a brake inhibiting the flow of ideas.
4. Originality. This is the ability to give uncommon responses to questions and unusual solutions to problems. There is some speculation as to whether originality is perhaps an attitude of unconventionality, which predisposes an individual not to perform in the usual or accepted manner.
5. Elaboration. One of the tests given to examinees for this factor required them to construct a complex object from one or two simple lines.

These traits seem to hang together to indicate the pattern one would use if asked to 'make' a creative individual. However, actual creative people, as distinct from idealized ones, may not fit exactly the tests that have been devised for them.

The time factor with reference to ideational fluency is an example of this. Herbert Read was a creative and profound thinker and writer in a wide range of subjects. Barbara Hepworth said that if she showed him her latest piece of sculpture he would look at it for half an hour before bringing himself to speak. Yet she valued his silence far more than the ready verbal reactions of others.<sup>5</sup> Charles Darwin's theory of evolution must be seen as creative. In the Introduction to "The Origin of Species" he says that on returning from the voyage of the 'Beagle': "After five years' work I allowed myself to speculate on the subject, and

drew up some short notes; ...." 6

### Divergent Thinking

In 1950 J.P. Guilford pointed out that almost all the tests and achievement examinations used by American psychologists and educationalists were 'convergent', that is they were asking for only one predetermined correct answer for each item. The truly creative person is likely to hit on a new answer, or range of possible answers - often not thought of by the examiners - in other words, to be divergent.

Traits such as fluency, flexibility and originality come within the general category of divergent thinking. Closely related is the factor identified as tolerance of ambiguity. Guilford expresses this as "... a willingness to accept some uncertainty in conclusions and decisions and a tendency to avoid thinking in terms of rigid categories." 7

The divergent type of person searches widely, he is capable of intellectual exploration. Thinking is not seen as a routine but an adventure.

Schiller understood, over one hundred years ago, that it hindered the creative work of the mind if the intellect examined too closely the ideas that were pouring in. The advice he gave was not to reject too soon or discriminate too severely.

A.J. Cropley describes creative thinking in terms of data coding. He refers to the creative person as a wide categorizer. The more a person accepts data which appear to have nothing in common as though they are related, the more likely he is to make unusual data combinations. The more likely he is to make the cognitive leap involved in thinking creatively.

Cropley summarises the characteristics of creative individuals in the cognitive domain by:

- "1 possession of wide categories;
- 2 willingness to take risks;
- 3 willingness to 'have a go';
- 4 high levels of flexibility." 8

Professor Ross L. Mooney describes the creative person as one who dares to be different, distrusts pat formulas and dislikes doing the same things the same way all the time. 9

Perhaps there is a conformity barrier and a certain type of individual enjoys breaking it.

## The Creative Process

This is indeed a truly wonderful and in some degree a mysterious affair. But many attempts have been made to follow it through.

As far back as 1926 G. Wallas identified four stages in the forming of a new thought: Preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. 10

In the 1930's Catherine Patrick studied creative thought in poets and artists and used these four stages. 11

There are likely to be endless variations on this theme and the stages may be intermingled. However, for the purposes of description, it is convenient to separate them.

Preparation: This may involve a long period of hard work. It will vary according to the individual and the type of creative work. It is the time for collecting data, reading, observing, thinking, note-taking, reviewing the field, absorbing the situation. It is the stage in which the problem is investigated from all directions.

Incubation: At this stage the problem may begin to be defined, but the individual is not consciously thinking about it. The unconscious processes get to work. This is the period the poet Stephen Spender has called the experience of 'Muddled suspense'. During this time trial and error attempts may be made at a solution, but avenues may be cul-de-sacs. This is the time for black coffee and pacing up and down. Ideas may be alternately rejected and accepted; there is a subconscious searching for fertile combinations.

According to the mathematician Poincaré, ideas rose in crowds and he appeared to be a spectator of a number of 'hooked atoms' which combined and re-combined throughout a restless night. 12

Part of the process of the incubation period may involve the kind of sleep so deep that two hours be required between sleeping and waking.

Wallas took the view that nothing should interfere with the working of the unconscious or partially conscious processes of the mind when faced with difficult problems.

Illumination: This is inspiration and it is often a sudden experience, apparently out of the blue. But it is a sign of long, conscious and unconscious previous work. The inspiration



seems like a gift, but it is necessary to be open to receive it. Verification: The final stage is the conscious working out process; the testing of the hypothesis or giving form to the idea. At this stage both skill and critical understanding may be required.

The first and last part of the creative process may be said to be conscious, the middle phases partly unconscious or subconscious.

#### Variations on the Creative Process Theme

Other terms may well be used for the four stages, for example, saturation, frustration, insight and elaboration.

Another classification, particularly suited to scientific work, may be the three stages of the formation of the hypothesis, the testing of the hypothesis and the communication of results. Vinacke has given consideration to the four phases of the creative process proposed by Wallas. He has concluded that: "It is necessary to conceive of creative thinking in terms of dynamic interplaying activities, rather than as more or less discrete stages." 13

A. Osborn considers that: "The actual creative process, without following any rigid sequence, consists of some or all the following phases: 1. Orientation: Pointing up the problem .... 2. Preparation: Gathering pertinent data.... 3. Analysis: Breaking down the relevant material.... 4. Hypothesis: Piling up alternatives by way of ideas.... 5. Incubation: Letting up, to invite illumination.... 6. Synthesis: Putting the pieces together.... 7. Verification: Judging the resultant ideas...." 14 In "Applied Imagination" specific suggestions are made to accomplish these phases. \*

\* Creative traits and the creative process were described in my M.Ed. dissertation - but in less detail: "Creative Art Education for Adults", 1976, pp.5-10.

## The Creative Process and the Creative Individual

An understanding of the creative process may be used in order to explain the nature and certain motivational aspects of the creative individual. The latter needs creative experience and expression as a way of life and fulfilment. It is therefore necessary for such a person to develop the characteristics and habits that the process requires.

Certain intellectual components, such as awareness and motivational factors such as drive, dedication to work and resourcefulness may be fairly obvious, particularly in relation to the 'preparation' phase. What is more significant may be the somewhat mysterious requirements of the incubation period.

There are many references in the literature to the anxieties of the incubation period. The individual needs to accept those anxieties that are associated with creative process. The process is an adventure and those who overvalue certainty and security may not be temperamentally suited to this. Tension tends to be regarded as in some degree neurotic; but the tensions of the incubation period are a genuine part of the process.

D.J. Jones has undertaken an investigation into eight non-vocational adult art classes. He asked the students questions including: "Is what you are doing creative?" He became fascinated by the process rather than the product, and observed: "Students feel threatened by the unknown depths of their own unconscious. It is this aspect of the process which gives rise to anxiety states. For this reason anxiety was seen as a possible indicator of creative involvement." 15

Aiming for a preconceived idea of the painting inevitably leads to frustration and discouragement, but this, says Jones, is not the anxiety of the creative process.

It is important for a teacher or therapist to be able to distinguish between these different types of anxiety.

Being able to work with the unconscious is the key to the problem at this stage. It is necessary, as J.S. Morgan says, to accept the partnership of the unconscious and the conscious mind. 16

A channel for insight is often made by providing time to browse, day-dream and gaze out of the window. It is necessary to enjoy the elements of surprise, irrationality and contradiction in one's own nature.

## The Conditions Required for Creative Ideas and Expression

According to C.W. Taylor there is very little knowledge concerning the effect of environment and training on creativity. He says that in most creativity studies the effects of the environmental variables have been uncontrolled and unknown.<sup>17</sup>

As there is a great diversity in creative people, the conditions they require are likely to vary. However, certain things may be regarded as important for further consideration.

Perhaps the conditions conducive to the emergence of creative ideas are unique to the individual. More thought needs to be given to encouraging a student to discover his own appropriate conditions.

There is something fragile about the creative climate. The most important factor may be freedom from distraction, but just what constitutes a distraction will vary with the individual. Society has an interesting part to play; the culture, the institution, the organisation can help. The way this should be done is by offering the unrestricted atmosphere.

As J.W. Haefele says, the creative individual must feel that: "those responsible for his environment display towards him attitudes of permissiveness and acceptance .... the climate necessary for maximizing creative potential."

"The act of working in a place one finds congenial for work provides for a sensory input of cues that have in the past provoked thought, sustained endurance, or perhaps been fruitful in evoking original ideas. The effect of such stimuli cannot be ignored, particularly in any explanation of sustained creative thinking."<sup>18</sup>

As already stated, problem anxieties may be wholesome; but situational frustrations are harmful, inhibiting the flow of creative ideas and diverting the energy needed for creative effort. It is therefore well worthwhile to establish a physical and psychological haven.. The writer's study or the artist's studio are not merely specialist rooms, ideally they are symbolic. They are sanctuaries of refuge and protection.



## Creativity and the Group Approach

It is interesting to explore certain forms of creativity in the group situation:

### Brainstorming

In 1939 A. Osborn organised the technique known as 'brainstorming'. He was an advertising executive associated with workshops, institutes and research dealing with creative types of behaviour and problem-solving in New York. The following rules were proposed as guides for brainstorming: "1. Judicial judgment is ruled out. 2. Free-wheeling is welcomed. 3. Quantity is wanted. 4. Combination and improvement are sought." <sup>19</sup> It is recommended that the subject to be considered by the brainstorming group be as specific as possible. The atmosphere needs to be one that encourages the flow of ideas, wild, unusual and divergent. The leader must make sure that ideas are not criticized, judgment must be deferred. Nothing inhibits the spontaneous flow of original ideas more than criticism. Evaluation belongs to a later phase and may be done by other people. Ultimately it may be impossible to get away from the creative power of the individual. However, at certain stages the problem-solving experience may be enhanced by minds in concert. The ideal number of participants for this technique may be between five and ten.

One has only to think of how ideas emerge in a tentative way in the average committee to realise that speculation is regarded as dangerous. The two most noticeable features of the traditional group of this kind are: keep to the familiar and reach a solution as soon as possible. But in order to reach a creative solution it is necessary to be open to the subconscious and the irrational, to play the 'what if' game and guard against premature attempts at a solution. Ideas that crystallise too quickly exhibit a lack of plasticity. The discipline of deferment is important: "Solutions are the payoff! But to hell with them .... Otherwise I'll invent the same thing over again." says W.J.J. Gordon. <sup>20</sup>

## Synectics

The word Synectics, from the Greek, means the joining together of different and apparently irrelevant elements. Synectic theory applies to the integration of individuals into a problem-solving group. The people, for example, that have made up the Cambridge, Massachusetts Group have included such diverse specialists as various combinations of painters, actors, chemists, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, zoologists, marketing men, mathematicians and musicians.

The Synectics Group is often concerned with invention type problems, but it is also involved in uncovering the psychological mechanisms basic to creative processes. There is an awareness that ultimate solutions are rational; the process of finding them is not.

There is a recognition of the importance of the emotional and the irrational elements. Attempts to get away from the accepted and obvious ways of thinking are achieved by such means as making the strange familiar and the familiar strange. One striking characteristic of a Synectics group is the use made of metaphorical language. The creative process is set in motion by analogy. Four forms of analogy have been identified: personal, direct, symbolic and fantasy. Personal analogy is concerned with empathic experience: Keats leaping into the sea in order to become one with the elements or Turner being tied to the mast of a ship in a storm. Direct analogy uses actual comparison of parallel facts, such as Brunel solving the problem of underwater construction by watching a shipworm tunnelling into a timber, the worm constructing a tube for itself as it moved forward. Biology has been discovered to be the richest source of stimulation by means of direct analogy.

Cavendish had a habit of carrying on widely dissimilar inquiries at the same time. He said that this permitted him to continually compare the phenomena and theories of one branch of science with those of another. A painter such as Kandinsky found direct analogy with musical composition. Symbolic analogy uses abstract, objective or impersonal images to describe a problem. One group working on a jacking mechanism came up with the Indian rope trick. The ideal symbolic analogy is a concise abstraction with a built-in-surprise or paradox. 21



Analogy mechanisms are really ways of making the familiar strange. This applies particularly to Fantasy analogy, where the concern is with the world of make believe. The creative process may often be set in motion by stepping outside of the realms of obvious logic and rationality. There is a special message for educators in this kind of research. It is not only the poet that may need metaphor, but perhaps the physicist also. It is not only the biologist that requires a knowledge of the life histories of plants and animals, but perhaps the engineer also. Technological breakthroughs are inhibited by traditional approaches. The inventor needs to give himself the same freedom as the artist and who dare place a boundary against what may be relevant to the artist?

## Creativity and Physiology

What now of the brain structure of creativity?

In order to attempt an answer to this question it is necessary to turn to recent research on the two hemispheres:

In "Nadia" Lorna Selfe paraphrases the work of Levy as follows: " The two cerebral hemispheres are assumed to complement one another in the integrated functioning of the brain. Each side of the brain is able to perform certain functions which the other side is not equipped to do. The right hemisphere is assumed to 'synthesize over space', while the left hemisphere 'analyses over time'. The right hemisphere notes visual similarities to the exclusion of conceptual similarities. The left hemisphere does the opposite. The right hemisphere perceives form, the left hemisphere detail. The right hemisphere codes sensory input in terms of images; the left hemisphere in terms of linguistic descriptions. The right hemisphere lacks a phonological analyser; the left hemisphere lacks a Gestalt synthesiser. The right side of the brain while optimally designed for its work, is extremely poorly organized for temporal analysis, abstract conceptualization, detailed feature detection, linguistic coding and phonological analysis. On the other hand, the left hemisphere appears to be very poorly organized for spacial co-ordination. Visual images are fragmented into components and only a small fraction of the information contained in a visual stimulus is extracted.

The description which Levy gives is expounded after a wide examination of a mass of sometimes contradictory experimental evidence. However, the model of a left hemisphere dominant for language and a right hemisphere dominant for perceptual processes is generally accepted." 22

As stated along similar lines by Carl Sagan: "The left hemisphere processes information sequentially; the right hemisphere simultaneously, accessing several inputs at once. The left hemisphere works in series; the right in parallel. The left hemisphere is something like a digital computer; the right like an analog computer." 23

Robert Ornstein, a Californian psychologist, has been inspired by Oriental studies to take a left-brain type of look at the nature of the right brain. At the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric

Institute in San Francisco it has been observed that as normal people change from analytic to synthetic intellectual activities the Electroencephalograph activity of the corresponding cerebral hemisphere varies in the predicted way. During the working out of arithmetical problems, for example, the right hemisphere shows the alpha rhythm characteristic with idling. It would seem that the somewhat brash nature of the left hemisphere may mask the more subtle and intuitive qualities of the right brain. It has to wait for the appropriate peace and quiet in order to function. As Ornstein points out, it is as though the sun has to set before the stars are noticed. 24

Altered states of consciousness, as in dreaming and meditation, are of interest in this research, for at such times the right brain comes into its own. However, during the highest states of awareness there would appear to be a tendency towards bilateral symmetry. The corpus callosum consists of a bundle of two hundred million fibres connecting the two hemispheres of the brain. As Sagan says: "To solve complex problems in changing circumstances requires the activity of both cerebral hemispheres: the path to the future lies through the corpus callosum." 25

During the last two years or so there have been wonderful machines made in this country called Mind Mirrors. One such machine would cost over £1,250, this give a hint of type of thing and of its delicacy and complexity. It is possible, by watching the flashing lights of the Mind Mirror when wired up to a person, to observe something of the mystery of the mental processes. During meditation Alpha, Theta and Delta waves may make balanced patterns in both hemispheres. The white hot creative flash of inspiration itself is not only a figment of the imagination. The Mind Mirror is capable of recording it as a perfect bubble-shaped form a split second before the individual is aware of his idea. Einstein is now realised to have been a truly creative scientist in the way he must have first responded to his intuitive right brain promptings, working them out later with left brain logic and precision. This subject is taken up again in Chapter IV with reference to the 1979 Dartington Conference where much attention was given to the 'two' brains. However, perhaps it should be stated, that there are differing views regarding the specific functions of the hemispheres.



## Psychedelic Experience

In "Psychedelic Art" by Masters & Houston is the following observation: "Of the classes of phenomena most common to the psychedelic experience, a few have particular relevance for the artist. They include (among others) accessibility of unconscious materials, relaxation of the boundaries of the ego, fluency and flexibility of thought, intensity of attention or heightened concentration, a breaking up of perceptual constancies, high capacity for visual imagery and fantasy, symbolizing and myth-making tendencies, empathy, accelerated rate of thought, 'regression in the service of the ego,' seeming awareness of internal body processes and organs, and awareness of deep psychical and spiritual levels of the self with capacity in some cases for profound religious and mystical experiences." 26

What is so interesting about this statement is that it almost reads like a list of what psychologists regard as the creative traits and the main components in the creative process.

Can it be that drugs such as mescaline, peyote, psilocybin and LSD-25 are able to induce creative states of mind? What seems to be likely is that the drugs provide experiences which may be used almost in the same way as travel to exotic places. One of the most significant aspects of the creative mind is the interest in the new and the novel idea. The creative process involves altered awareness. It would therefore seem that anything that serves to break down barriers and open up the out-of-the-ordinary states of mind may be potentially helpful.

Perhaps artists stand to profit most from psychedelic types of experience. However drugs can only provide the spring-board and perhaps the feeling of insight. The individual himself has still got to make something of it. Unless the individual is rooted in a creative way of life the psychedelic experience itself may be all too ephemeral.

With reservations of this kind, it is nevertheless worth looking at the psychedelic experiences. The very words and descriptions themselves are certainly stimulating: One can find references to mind expanding and heightened awareness, to joyous, ecstatic, mystical, pantheistic states. There may be distortions of time and space; swirling, kaleidoscopic sensations and deconditioning processes to contend with.

All this creates an openness to new ways of being and to a

breaching of the divisions between the conscious and unconscious levels.

Isaac Abrams is an interesting example of a highly original artist, his pictures abound with the flora and fauna of the psychedelic world. He had his first LSD session in 1965 and never painted at all before this.

Arlene Sklar-Weinstein is an example of a professional artist. Prior to LSD her work was academic and tight, afterwards it became free-flowing and very lively. There was a shift from the concrete towards the abstract and the cosmic myth.

There is a certain parallel between the psychedelic experience and some of the mystical traditions of the East. Masters and Houston say that one of the most complex of the American psychedelic artists is Allen Atwell. He has lived and studied in the East and absorbed the traditions of the Tibetan masters. His most amazing work is an environmental painting in a psychedelic temple in New York. The painting covers the walls and ceiling and adjoining spaces. One has the feeling of being inside a mind, rather than merely looking at a picture.

The mystical language seems to be used in an attempt to describe the psychedelic experience. After taking mescaline Aldous Huxley speaks of the sacramental vision of reality. The bamboo legs of his chair shine with the Inner Light. He says: "I spent several minutes - or was it several centuries? - not merely gazing at those bamboo legs, but actually being them - or rather being myself in them; or, to be still more accurate being my Not-self in the Not-self which was the chair." 27

This reads very much like Zen Buddhism. Zen is personal and subjective, in the sense of being inner and creative. Zen unconditionally emphasizes one's immediate experience as the final fact. Zen attempts to free the mind from dualistic tangles.

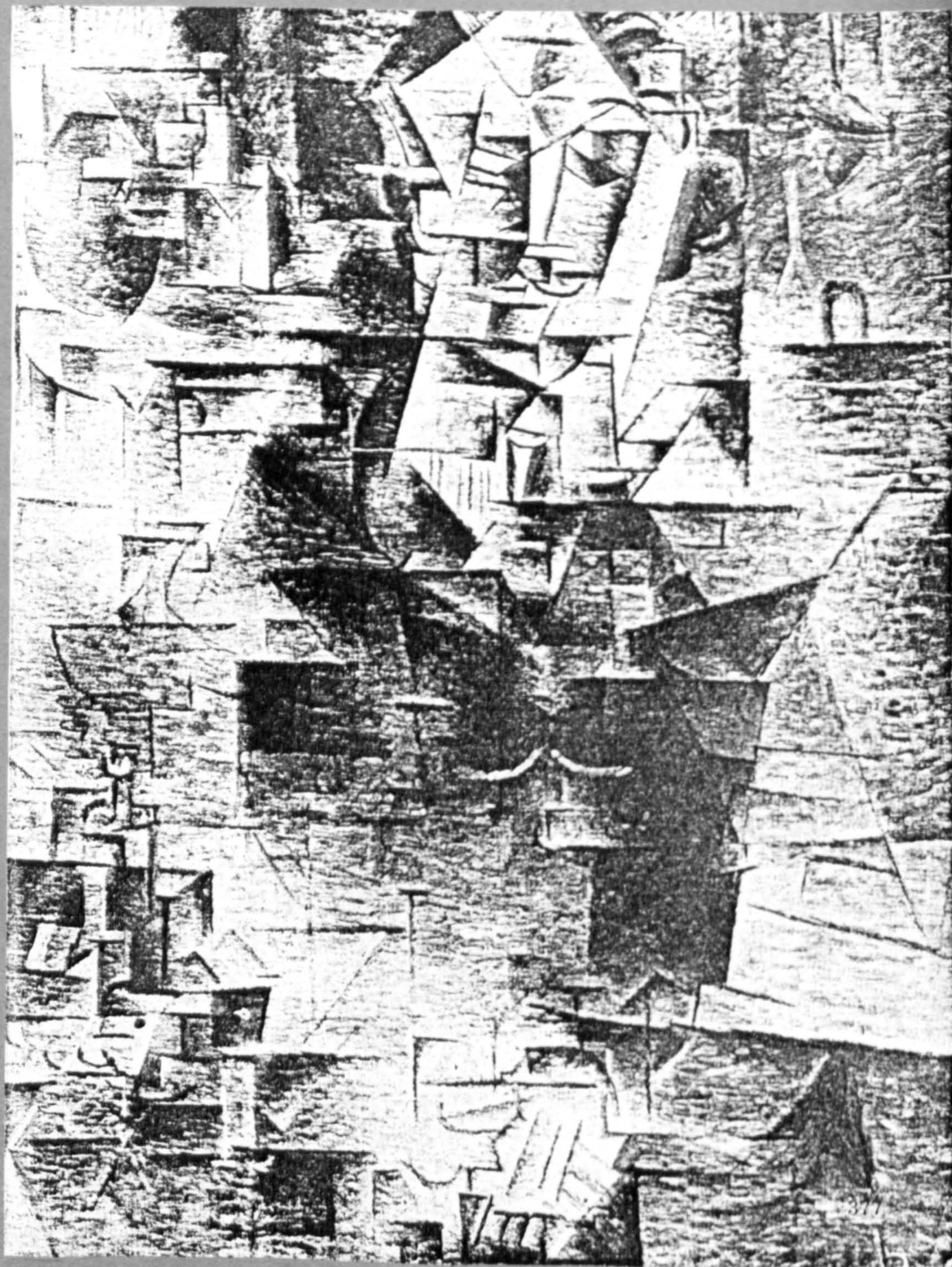
However, returning to art. Where does psychedelic art fit in relation to developments generally? There would seem to be a link with Expressionism and intensity of feeling; with the intentional ambiguities of Cubism; with psychological orientations of Surrealism and with the Vienna School of Fantastic Realism. There are links with Action Painting, Pop Art, Op Art, Kinetic Art, Happenings and Pleasure Domes. The Multi-Media approach using sound, film and oscilloscopes may often be essential to convey the dynamic panorama of life.

During 1967-68 S. Krippner made a study of 91 professional artists, mainly from New York. The artists were required to have had at least one experience with psychedelic drugs. They were approached by means of questionnaires and interviews. Krippner's fundamental question was concerned with how the artist felt his work had been affected by psychedelic experiences. This study seems to be a more meaningful one than those where psychologists or psychiatrists themselves establish the criteria of creativity.

Sixty-four of the artists felt that the content of their work had been much enhanced by eidetic imagery. Forty-nine of the artists felt that their technique had improved. A wide variety of expression was represented and many of the artists engaged in more than one form of expression, none felt that their work had suffered as a result of their experiences. 28

Two other aspects of the situation should be mentioned: Firstly, as Barry Schwartz says, "Artists who want to express the emotion, insight or essence of psychedelic experience will create works that are highly individual in their rendering and not always visually recognizable as psychedelic." 29 Secondly, there are artists who have psychedelic sensibility, yet they have not used chemical stimulation. Perhaps they are already aware that "All things are Part of One Thing"; perhaps they are already in "The Enchanted Land of the Imagination". Perhaps they have an inherent tendency towards fantasy and cosmic myth, towards symbolism and subjective experience. This may be possible through introspective inclinations, meditation, intuitive gifts or just the basic chemistry of their natural state.





Analytical Cubism

Picasso's 1910 portrait of the dealer Kahnweiler



## Philosophy, Perception and Creativity

The ideas arising from a consideration of Cubism offer an opportunity for an exploration of questions of appearance and reality and their relationship with creativity: According to

R. Rosenblum "Cubism emerges as one of the major transformations of Western Art. The discoveries of Cubism controverted principles that had prevailed for centuries. For the traditional distinction between solid form and the space around it, Cubism substituted a radically new fusion of mass and void. In place of earlier perspective systems that determined the precise location of discrete objects in illusory depth, Cubism offered an unstable structure of dismembered planes in indeterminate spacial positions. Instead of assuming that the work of art was an illusion of a reality that lay beyond it, Cubism proposed that the work of art was itself a reality that represented the very process by which nature is transformed into art.

In the new world of Cubism, no fact of vision remained absolute: A dense, opaque shape could suddenly become a weightless transparency; a sharp firm outline could abruptly dissolve into a vibrant texture; a plane that defined the remoteness of the background could be perceived simultaneously in the immediate foreground. Even the identity of objects was not exempt from these visual contradictions. In a Cubist work, a book could be metamorphosed into a table, a hand into a musical instrument. For a century that questioned the very concept of absolute truth or value, Cubism created an artistic language of intentional ambiguity." 30

According to E.H. Gombrich: "In Cubism even coherent forms are made to play hide-and-seek in the elusive tangle of unresolved ambiguities." 31

John Nash, with particular reference to the early 20th century experiments of Braque and Picasso, speaks of the importance of the element of mystery; of the need to accept what is offered in order to enjoy a new perception of the world. 32

Experiments such as Cubism seem to emphasize the fact that the world of optical illusion is banal; but in trying to go beyond it is reality discovered? Is there a reality out there and if so can its fundamental nature be understood? Does the visual world only become the real world by the processes of thought? Is the real world always the private one? Is ultimate Truth the private world of God?



Where, amid the multiplicity of ever shifting images, may we find an anchor? Perhaps there is no such thing as an object as it really is. Perhaps each person forms his own image. It is in this area that the roots of creativity may be found. The individual has the opportunity of making something unique out of the interweaving of his perceptions with his personal reactions to his perceptions. What he selects and chooses to emphasize becomes his experience. The artist imposes reality on the surrounding chaos.

When one sees a new and exciting work of art, the question may not be: Is this a discovery regarding the true nature of the world? But, rather the acceptance of an adventure, does this work extend the boundaries of the possible? However, it may not be easy to escape illusion entirely: According to E.H. Gombrich

"The true miracle of the language of art is not that it enables the artist to create the illusion of reality. It is that under the hands of a great master the image becomes translucent. In teaching us to see the visible world afresh, he gives us the illusion of looking into the invisible realms of the mind." 33

## Eastern Philosophy and the Creative Unconscious

Embedded in the esoteric wisdom of the East is to be found the central idea of creative power, inspiration and enlightenment.

Far back in the mists of time, the essential core of Indian metaphysical thought, as expressed in the Vedas, is of One Universal Being, neither male nor female, raised high above all conditions and limitations of personality. The secret teachings of the Upanishads concerns this Universal Self, referred to as Brahman - 'It or 'That'. It is paradoxical, transcendent, yet immanent. In one sense the individual self or atman may be seen as a ray from the Universal Self: Thou art That; therefore there is a direct pathway to the source of inspiration:

According to the Katha Upanishad:

"A sharpened edge of a razor, hard to traverse,  
A difficult path is this - poets declare!  
What is soundless, touchless, formless, imperishable,  
Likewise tasteless, constant, odourless,  
Without beginning, without end, higher than the great stable -  
By discerning That, one is liberated from the mouth of death."

In the Mandukya Upanishad four states are described: Waking, dreaming, profound sleep and liberation. This sounds like another kind of description of the creative process! 34

The Bhagavad-Gita, that jewel of Indian poetry from the Epic period of Hinduism, takes its inspiration from the Upanishads. Chapter X gives a glorious pantheistic survey. In the Gita the Supreme is at once the transcendental, the cosmic and the individual reality:

"Yea! First, and Last, and Centre of all which is or seems  
I am, Arjuna! Wisdom Supreme of what is wise,  
Words on the uttering lips I am, and eyesight of the eyes,  
....  
The splendour of the splendid, and the greatness of the great,  
Victory I am, and Action! and the goodness of the good....  
The policy of conquerors, the potency of kings,  
The great unbroken silence in learning's secret things;" 35

The sublime eleventh chapter describes how Krishna reveals to Arjuna the vision of the Universal Form, blazing as fire, as the sun all-dazzling to the gaze.

Through the Indian teaching of Yoga there is an important message for all creative thinkers and workers. The word literally means the 'yoke'; it is the yoking of the personal self with the cosmic force. By a process of training involving such things as the control of the breath, the concentration of thought and meditation it may eventually be possible to reach out towards higher levels of consciousness.

According to the teachings of Patanjali, Yoga means the complete suspension of the transformations of the thinking principle. Non-attachment is seen as the preliminary of real intuitional knowledge.

The training of the Yogi is usually undertaken by a number of stages. If the mind is to become one-pointed both inertia and the habit of flitting from one thing to another have to be overcome. 36

The purpose of the training, in the initial phases, seems to be the bringing of the student to the verge of the unconscious. From creative concentration the Yogi comes to the state free from effort, to contemplation. When the mind is concerned only with the object of thought no energy is lost in distraction. Harold Rugg describes this stage as profoundly productive. He says: "This supplies further confirmation of the conditions favouring the creative act: the concentration of attention, 'the interval of suspense,' and then the sudden flash of illumination which the East calls the 'creative climax'." 37

Expressions such as a leap in the dark or floating in air come to mind to suggest this kind of experience.



Creative intuition may also be said to be at the heart of the ancient Chinese teaching of the Tao. Emphasis is placed on following the natural, spontaneous way in a state of relaxed detachment. When the tense conscious mind is transcended, the individual is prepared for imaginative experience. But simplicity goes hand in hand with profundity in Chinese philosophy. The words of Lao Tzu are paradoxical, enigmatic and mysterious. In the very first 'chapter' of the Tao Te Ching this at least is made clear:

"The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao."

"The name that can be named is not the eternal name."

And in Chapter Fourteen:

"Look, it cannot be seen - it is 'beyond form."

Listen, it cannot be heard - it is beyond sound."

Grasp, it cannot be held - it is intangible.....

Stand before it and there is no beginning."

Follow it and there is no end." 38

Zen Buddhism is another example of Eastern philosophy with a message for the creative seeker. Zen is personal and subjective, in the sense of being inner and intuitive. Unless it grows out of yourself, no knowledge is really of any value to you. Through Zen the old way of viewing things is abandoned and the world acquires a new significance. Not for the Zen Buddhist the contemplation of emptiness. Zen is mental upheaval.

Nor is Zen having an interview with the Creator, it is seeing into the work of creation. Zen wants absolute freedom, even from God. 'No abiding place' means that.

Zen evades all definition and explanation.

Zen works miracles by overhauling the whole system of one's inner life and opening up undreamed of worlds. 39

As John Livingston Lowes says, in "The Road to Xanadu",  
 "There enter into imaginative creation three factors which  
 reciprocally interplay: the Well, and the Vision, and the Will.  
 Without the Vision, the chaos of elements remains a chaos and  
 the Form sleeps forever in the vast chambers of unborn designs.  
 Yet in that chaos only could creative Vision ever see this  
 Form ...." 40

Coleridge's own words from Kubla Khan may be used to suggest  
 the three factors:

The Well is "the caverns measureless to man" of the unconscious  
 mind.

The Vision is "the sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!"

The Will is the urge to "build that dome in air,

That sunny dome! those caves of ice!"

Harold Rugg has made a special study of what he called the  
 transliminal mind - "the mind across the threshold between the  
 conscious and the unconscious." He described it as a dynamic  
 antechamber in which creative flashes occur.

"Most significant, it is the only part of the continuum  
 that is clearly free from censorship. It is off-guard, relaxed,  
 receptive to messages, but it is also magnetic, with a dynamic  
 forming power. I think of it as 'off-conscious,' not unconscious,  
 for the organism is awake, alert, and very much in control. It  
 is hypnoidal, resembling the light trance of autohypnosis. It  
 satisfies the criteria of the intuitively identifying mind of  
 intense concentration, characteristic of the work of an Einstein,  
 a Cezanne, a Lao-tzu, a true Indian Yogin, or a Zen master-artist."



## Cosmic Art

At this point it may be of interest to mention some research that was undertaken by R.F. Piper & L.K. Piper on the theme of Cosmic Art. The research covered 30 years and over 2,000 artists in 64 different countries were interviewed. Over 2,000 photographs of works of art were collected and this visual material was supported by inspirational writing. The artists were asked the following six questions:

1. Can you formulate the special symbolic meanings in your work?
2. Please put down a frank, clear, compact statement of the mood, sentiment, idea, or vision which you experienced.
3. Please name any religious, metaphysical or occult society, organisation or movement in which you are, or have been actively interested, and indicate its effect upon your viewpoint and art.
4. If you have had any extraordinary mystical, aesthetic or psychic experience, or conceptions of God, beauty, or the spiritual life, which might explain your creation, would you kindly summarize them?
5. Please state briefly your idea of God, of man, and of man's goal or purpose in existence.
6. If you have formulated any striking or illuminating aphorisms or maxims about art, religion or God, please record them.

"Mankind is entering a space-conscious age, a cosmic age, in which his conceptions of space and time are becoming immensely enlarged in three fields or directions - in stellar galaxies, in the intricacies of the atom, and in the psychic, religious, and aesthetic realms of human awareness.

Consequently, cosmic artists face unprecedented challenges to create works that communicate the emotional significance, truth, and beauty of these expanding vastnesses in their countless aspects." 42

The titles of the pictures suggest psychic, inspirational, metaphysical or transpersonal themes such as: 'Glorious Perception', 'Radiation', 'Transformation', 'Creative Forces', 'The Divine Omnipotence' and 'The Ascending Self'.

## Creativity and Occultism

Occult Art may be regarded as an aspect of Cosmic Art.

Reference to "The Art of the Invisible" is appropriate here:

This remarkable researched exhibition came to the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, from the Bede Gallery, Jarrow, from 3 April - 6 May, 1979. The exhibition, described in the sub-title as "The Spiritual in Art - the Art of the Spiritual", looks at the influence of theosophy, anthroposophy and other spiritual movements on the first European abstract artists such as Kandinsky and Mondrian. At the entrance to the exhibition it stated: "The Art of the Invisible" explores for the first time the considerable impact of occultism on modern art." 43

The patterns of influence are many and complex. Hindu and Buddhist meditation diagrams have, for example, much in common with modern abstract art. Tracing some of these links and associations is a fascinating field of exploration. Madame Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical Society, was of Russian origin like Kandinsky. He was well aware of her ideas and quoted from her "Key to Theosophy" in his "Concerning the Spiritual in Art". 44

Kandinsky wrote of the only hope for humanity in terms of the rediscovery of the spirit. He wrote of form and colour in metaphysical language. He felt that as scientists such as Max Planck and Einstein had shattered the old solid picture of the world; he could destroy the old 'realistic' type of art and replace it with visual harmonies symbolic of the underlying spiritual nature of the universe. To Kandinsky art work was virtually a living body that helped to shape the spiritual reality. Painting was a power to be directed towards the refinement of the soul. In this sense abstract art was not to be seen as art devoid of content; but rather as art with a vibrating and mysterious content.



Mondrian had joined the Dutch branch of the Theosophical Society in 1909 and in 1913 he was asked to write an article "Art and Theosophy" for the magazine "Theosophia" As Arnason says: "Mondrian, through his 'equivalence of opposites,' was seeking the expression of a unity that in its turn would be expressive of the higher mystical unity he sensed in man and the universe." <sup>45</sup> To Mondrian, the horizontal line crossing the vertical, geometrical shapes such as the circle, triangle, pentacle and double triangle could all be understood in relation to occult teachings. He was also aware of the mystical significance of colour. He saw art as the means towards the creation of a new and unified environment.

The mention of Rudolf Steiner brings many associations to mind, perhaps to many people particularly the subject of education and the Steiner schools. However, he was first trained in mathematics in Vienna, then he became interested in Goethe, editing his scientific works for a journal. In 1887 he moved to Berlin, and by 1902 he had joined the Theosophical Society. Steiner's theosophy was closely linked with Christianity and European mysticism. He became editor of the journal 'Lucifer' and Kandinsky was one of its readers. Later he lectured in Holland and Mondrian was in his audience. In 1907 he gave 14 lectures at a congress held in Munich. There was an exhibition of Theosophical Art to coincide with the conference and Kandinsky was a participant at this conference. In 1913 Steiner formed his own Anthroposophical Society.

In 1901 and 1902 two books were published of special significance: "Thought Forms" by C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant and "Man Visible and Invisible" by Leadbeater. Both books had water colour sketches by John Varley. Both books take the view that



there is no fundamental difference between spirit and matter; that there is a corresponding expression of feelings and thoughts in terms of form and colour on the physical plane. 46

Odilon Redon was an artist aware of Indian poetry and theosophy, his art may be described as imaginative rather than abstract. In a film shown during the exhibition Redon spoke of art as expressive and evocative, as a door opening onto a mystery. He spoke of the unconscious as the wine of life and the sea as the voice of infinity.

As stated in the catalogue, other aspects of the genesis of abstract art could have been explored for an exhibition of wider scope. It would also be of interest to explore the possibilities of links of a direct nature between the occult and other modern art movements, as for example with Surrealism. As stated in "Art and the Occult", there is Yves Tanguy's desert or void: "the zone of hope and peril".... "This is where Max Ernst's 'eye of silence' broods at the hinterland of desert and labyrinth." 47 There is probably material for a BBC 13 part series on the whole subject.

By way of a personal note: I began painting abstract and fantastic pictures around my mid-teens, at the same time I discovered the Theosophical Society. A few years later I gave lectures on such subjects as "Behind the Facade" and "Art and Theosophy" and I wrote articles on similar themes in their journal. The ancient wisdom was a source of inspiration, but at that time I knew nothing of how it had also been so to Kandinsky and Mondrian.





Emil Nolde

The Sea III 1947



## Creativity and Freedom

Creative people are the leaders in the world of ideas.

They need freedom in order to function satisfactorily. Imposed hierarchical institutions and illiberal attitudes are an anathema to them. They cannot easily be conditioned and therefore present a threat to dictatorships of all kinds. It is possible to write the story of oppression through the experiences of the artists involved. Kandinsky, for instance, left Russia for Germany and then in 1914 returned to Russia. But on account of the Soviet Government's official attitude towards abstract art he returned again to Germany in 1921. He taught at the Bauhaus, but this being a liberal institution, was closed by the Nazis in 1933, this time Kandinsky went to Paris. Kokoschka became a critic of the Nazi regime and escaped to England in 1938. Kirchner, one of the founders of the form of Expressionism known as 'The Bridge', had over 600 of his pictures confiscated by the Nazis and shown in the Munich exhibition of 'Degenerate Art'. These events and his failing health led to his suicide. Heckel, another expressionist artist, fled to Switzerland in 1944, after about 700 of his pictures had been removed from German museums and his Berlin studio had been destroyed. Yet another expressionist, E. Nolde, an artist capable of painting with explosive power, had over 1,000 of his works confiscated in the 1937 Nazi art purge and was forbidden to paint. To add to the irony of the situation his Berlin studio was destroyed by bombing! 48

By their attitude and actions the Nazis showed that they were aware of the great political potency of artists, both in terms of their 'creative behaviour' and their products. In Russia the prospect for the artist looked promising in the early years of the Revolution with pioneers such as Malevitch, Gabo and Pevsner. But by 1922 the Party line favoured story-telling realism which could work as propaganda and many avant-garde artists left the country. In the 1930s Gabo caught up with some of his friends in London. The result of persecution has often been the spreading of the ideas of the persecuted. Political dictatorships pay artists a compliment by recognising that free and original ideas are dangerous to their cause. The type of art that is spontaneous and lively tends to encourage daring and innovatory thinking.

## The Biographical and Autobiographical Approach

Some light may be thrown on creativity and the creative process by considering what creative workers or their biographers have to say on the subject. Two artists in particular have been selected for this section. In the case of Van Gogh, his letters to his brother form an almost continuous record of an intensely personal search involving the extremes of pathos and rapture. As regards Paul Klee, there are several reasons for the choice: Firstly, on account of his original mind; secondly, the sheer quantity of ideas given expression over his life as a whole; thirdly, because he has written down his own feelings about the mystery of the creative process and finally, the somewhat erratic nature of creative work is illustrated by his very personal working methods. He had, for example, long periods of inertia followed by bursts of violent activity, when he would set up a whole group of easels.



M.I. Stein writes of the individualized conditions favouring creativity: "There are some who can begin their work only after all the pencils are sharpened; others work best on typewriters. There are some who can only work when the desk is 'cleared for action,' but there are others who prefer a disorderly room or studio. While some prefer quiet, others prefer music and even noise. Some will insist upon carrying out their rituals; others may know rituals they prefer but may not always indulge in them for fear of what others around them may think."

Quoting from a number of investigators, Stein describes a variety of ways in which creative individuals have been known to utilize techniques suited to their personalities. Listed below are some of his references:

Emile Zola avoided daylight and pulled the shades at midday to work in artificial light.

Kipling wrote only with the blackest ink he could find.

Ben Jonson believed that he performed best while drinking great quantities of tea, and while stimulated by the purring of a cat and the strong odour of orange peel.

Schiller kept rotten apples in his desk and immersed his feet in ice-cold water.

Shelley and Rousseau remained bareheaded in the sunshine.

Bousseut worked in a cold room with his head wrapped in furs.

Milton, Descartes and Rossini lay stretched out.

Leibniz secluded himself for very long periods.

Thoreau built his hermitage.

Proust worked in a cork-lined room, Carlyle in a noise-proof chamber.

Balzac wore a monkish working garb and liked to work at night with the help of much strong black coffee.

Guido Reni could paint, and de Musset could write poetry, only when dressed in magnificent style.

Mozart worked following exercise. 49

These idiosyncratic tactics may be said to help the individual to feel relaxed but alert. In some cases an attempt is made to arrange a situation that offers security.

## The Feelings and Ideas of Van Gogh

Van Gogh, in his letters to his brother, has written much of interest regarding the whole creative process and the way the artist works:

1881 - 1883

"They will always, either in or outside the family, judge me or talk about me from different points of view, and you will always hear the most different opinions about me. And I blame no one for it, because relatively few people know why an artist acts in this way or that."

"And I must be calm and quiet in order to work; it is difficult enough anyhow. I think the success or failure of a drawing depends greatly upon the mood and condition of the painter. Therefore, I try to do what I can to keep cheerful and clear-headed. But sometimes, as now, a heavy depression overcomes me, and then it is damnation...."

"....But I am so angry with myself because I cannot do what I should like to do, and at such a moment one feels as if one were lying bound hand and foot at the bottom of a deep dark well, utterly helpless."

"....let me be true to myself, and in a rough manner express severe, rough, but true things."

".... I should like to know since when they can force, or try to force an artist to change either his technique or his point of view! I think it very impertinent to attempt such a thing."

" " It is in life as in drawing: one must sometimes act quickly and decidedly, attack a thing with energy, trace the outlines as quickly as lightning."

"The fishermen know that the sea is dangerous and the storm terrible, but they have never found those dangers sufficient reason for remaining ashore."

"... And I am not a person who works slowly or tamely. Drawing becomes a passion with me, and I throw myself into it more and more."

".... At the point where you drop the description the real throes and anguish of creating begins;...."

".... It was purely a question of colour and tone, the

iridescence of the colour scheme of the sky - first a violet haze, in which the red sun was half covered by a dark purple cloud with a brilliant fine red border; near the sun reflections of vermilion, but above it a streak of yellow that turns into green and then into blue, the so-called cerulean blue; and here and there the grey clouds that catch reflections from the sun."

"I like painting so much, Theo, that because of the expense I shall have to repress myself rather than urge myself on. It becomes too expensive if one is not economical with the paint; but, boy, it is so delightful to have so many new and good materials;...."

"The figure of a labourer - some furrows in a ploughed field - a bit of sand, sea and sky - are serious subjects, very difficult, but at the same time so beautiful that it is indeed worth while to devote one's life to the task of expressing the poetry hidden in them."

"Now I feel myself on the high seas; the painting must be continued with all the strength I can give it. I know for sure that I have an instinct for colour, and that it will come to me more and more; that painting is the very bone and marrow of me. I feel in myself such a creative power that I am conscious the time will arrive when, so to speak, I shall daily and regularly make something good. I should not be at all surprised if it happened some day. But very rarely a day passes that I do not make something."

"Feeling is a great thing, and without it one would not be able to do anything." 50

Antwerp, 1885

"They are building state museums for hundreds of thousands; meanwhile the artists can go to the dogs."

"After this class, from half-past ten till half-past eleven, I work from the model at the club; I have become a member of two of these clubs...."

"When I compare myself to the other fellows there is something stiff and awkward about me; I look as if I had been in prison for ten years...."

"I finished yesterday the drawing which I made for the competition of the evening class. It is the figure of Germanicus."



I am sure I shall be the last, because the drawings of all the others are just alike, and mine is absolutely different. But the drawing which they will think the best, I have seen it made; I was sitting just behind it. It is correct, but it is dead. And that is what all the drawings are that I saw."

"One cannot predict anything with certainty. But if one analyzes one sees that the greatest and most energetic people of the century have always worked against the grain, and have always worked from personal initiative - both in painting and in literature."

".... the more of their lives I trace, the more I find always the same story: lack of money, bad health, opposition, isolation, trouble from beginning to end." 51

Arles, 1888

"I am in the middle of 'Pierre et Jean,' by Guy de Maupassant. It is good. In the preface he declares the liberty of the artist to exaggerate, to create in his novel a world more beautiful, more simple, more consoling than ours, and goes on to explain, what Flaubert perhaps meant when he said that 'Talent is long patience, and originality an effort of will and of intense observation.'

I believe in the absolute necessity for a new art of colour, of design, and - of the artistic life."

"There are some wonderful nights here. I am in a continual fever of work."

"I don't see the future black before me, but I do see it bristling with difficulties."

"First, I had a period of absolutely absorbing work; then I was so exhausted and so ill that I let things go."

"I want to get my drawing more spontaneous. I am trying now to exaggerate the essential, and, of set purpose, to leave the obvious vague. What Pissarro says is true: You must boldly exaggerate the effects either of harmony or discord which colours produce; exact drawing, exact colour, is not the essential thing."

"The cornfields have been a reason for working, just as were the orchards in bloom; I have only just time to get ready for the next campaign, that of the vineyards, and between the two I should

like to do some seascapes. The orchards meant rose and white, the cornfields yellow, and the seascapes blue. Perhaps I shall begin now to look about a bit for greens. There's the autumn, and that will give the whole range of the lyre."

"I feel more and more that we must not judge God on the basis of this world; it's a study that didn't come off."

"I work because I must, so as not to suffer too much mentally."

"Sheer work and calculation, with one's mind utterly on the stretch, with a hundred things to think of in a single half-hr."

"When anyone says that such and such a work was done too quickly, you can reply that he has looked at it too quickly."

"To my amazement, I am already in sight of the bottom of my purse. You realize that when I have taken out money for food & lodging, all the rest goes for canvas and paints."

"Now that I hope to live in a studio of my own. I want to make decorations for it; nothing but big flowers. If I carry out this idea there will be a dozen panels. The whole thing will be a symphony in blue and yellow, and I am working at it every morning from sunrise, for the flowers fade so soon, and the thing is to do the whole at a flash."

"But my idea is that at the end of it all we shall have founded and left to posterity a studio where one's successor could live, where one finds one works more tranquilly. In other words, we are working for an art and for a way of things which will last not only our lifetime, but which can still be carried on by others after us."

"It is looking at things for a long time that ripens you and gives you a deeper understanding."

"Today again, from seven o'clock in the morning till six in the evening, I worked without stirring except to eat a bite a step or two away."

"These colours give me extraordinary exaltation. I have no thought of fatigue; I shall do another picture this very night, and I shall bring it off. I have a terrible lucidity when nature is so beautiful; I am not conscious of myself any more, and the pictures come to me as in a dream." 52



## Paul Klee 1879 - 1940

Klee was born in Switzerland. His father was German and taught music and his mother was interested in art. Klee had drawing lessons from the age of five and by the time he was seven he had already created his first illustrated story book showing costumed plants and animals.

At the age of nineteen he decided to study art in Munich. In 1901 he made a journey to Italy and studied early Christian and Byzantine paintings. In 1905 he visited Paris and later made several more visits to France. He also studied the exhibitions of French Post-Impressionist painters in Munich.

Klee's first exhibition was held in Berne in 1910. In 1911 he linked up with the Blue Rider artists led by Kandinsky and Marc. He contributed to the second Blue Rider Exhibition in 1912.

He said that it all happened because of a deep inner necessity because the conventional world was no longer bearable and everything threatened to suffocate in weariness and lies.

The Blue Rider was equated in Klee's mind with freedom. He had reached a point from which he could look deep into the realm of free form and colour.

In 1914 he received much inspiration from a visit to North Africa. During the war he undertook administrative work and carried on drawing. In 1921 he moved to Weimar to take up a teaching appointment at the Bauhaus. During the 1920s Klee and Kandinsky played a leading part in giving the Bauhaus an international reputation. 53

In 1931 Klee became a professor at Dusseldorf Academy. In 1933 he was dismissed by the Nazis and he returned to Berne.

Klee's art followed many stages of development. At the beginning of the 20th century he produced Goya-like drawings and etchings expressing bitter humour. Later he came under the influence of Post-Impressionism, Fauvism and Cubism. Finally he emerged as a highly original artist with a personal message.

Herbert Read described his work as the "Art of Free Fancy". A lyrical quality of line is an essential characteristic of his art. Many of his pictures have a fairy-tale feeling, revealing a Gothic world of elfish flowers and fabulous creatures. 54

Klee was extremely versatile: He was able to submerge himself in the art of deranged people, and he gave to the art of children



a mystical extension of meaning. He studied physics, mathematics, biological science and the world under the microscope. Philosophy and psychology of the unconscious mind were very important to him. Klee inherited the idea of the unconscious as part of the German cultural tradition. He thought of painting as a spontaneous type of activity and felt that the best pictures could not be willed into being.

In his diary, the Creative Credo, he wrote: "The work of art is above all a process of creation; it is never experienced as a mere product."

Werner Haftmann has described Klee's working process as follows: "Summoned to action at the moment of inspiration, he begins without any conscious, let alone object-directed intention. Entirely engrossed in his work, thinking only of organisation, he articulates, orders and moves his pictorial planes, and intensely meditating on the emerging world of forms, follows up every lead suggested by the developing design. The subtly organised patterns grow slowly out of the chaotic background, and as one layer of colour succeeds another, the picture gradually acquires its broad melodic outline and evocative richness." 55

Again, Haftmann vividly describes the process: "Klee was a tireless worker, but he knew that one must be patient with an image if it is to yield up its meaning. He was busy all day at his work-table, scraping, priming, spraying, dabbing, scratching, drawing or hanging up damp sheets of watercolour on a line to dry. All around his studio, on easels and on the walls, were pictures, some begun, some half-finished or almost finished, but each with its own troubles and demands, Klee moved among them like a magician, going from one to another listening attentively to the requests of each." 56

Klee sensed that there was something deep within himself that demanded to be made visible. He was aware of being possessed by colour. But also he regarded the creative process in the same terms as a plant growing and unfolding.

At the Bauhaus he taught his students the importance of not relying on ready-made forms. He stressed that in order to avoid artificiality it was necessary to work one's own way through a process and not cut in part way through, or take over someone else's finished product.

Klee was highly sensitive to the 20th century currents of

scientific and philosophical thought and his art lies below the visible surface. He wrote in his "Creative Credo" in 1920: "In former times artists represented things which were to be seen in the world, things which they liked to see, or would have liked to see. Today the relativity of visible objects is made evident, testifying to the belief that that which is visible is merely an isolated example in relation to the totality of existence, and that most real truths lie hidden. Objects appear in a widened and multiplied meaning, often apparently contradicting the rational experience of yesterday." 57

He wrote: "Art does not reproduce what we see. It makes us see."

The very titles of his pictures reveal his interest in the surreal world:

Hour of Destiny at a Quarter to Twelve, Trembling Chapel, Slight Collapse, Cosmic Flora, Error on Green, War of the Birds, Revolution of the Viaduct, Fish Magic, Materialised Ghosts, Untamed Waters, Fear of Becoming Double, Under a Black Star and Meditation.

There is something mystical about the way Klee writes: In "On Modern Art" he refers to the womb of nature, the source of creation and the secret key. He speaks of the pounding heart that drives us down, deep down to the source of all.

"What springs from this source, whatever it may be called, dream, idea or phantasy - must be taken seriously only if it unites with the proper creative means to form a work of art.

Then those curiosities become realities - realities of art which help to lift life out of its mediocrity.

For not only do they, to some extent, add more spirit to the seen, but they also make secret visions visible." 58



## Historical and Anthropological Perspectives

Further light may be thrown on the nature of creativity by looking at the art of other times and other cultures. The concept of creativity may be understood by selecting one archetypal form, the Mandala.

### The Mandala

Jung made a perilous journey into his own unconscious, knowing well enough that those who make the journey do not always find their way back. He wanted to investigate a way of communicating with the unconscious leading to a deeper and fuller existence. After nightmarish experiences he began at last to paint Mandalas, those archaic symbols of wholeness.

The Mandala has had psychological significance from the earliest expressions of human consciousness to 20th-century art. It is a sanskrit word meaning circle or magic ring. There are as many forms of the Mandala as there are situations. The two basic types are the Cosmic Fortress or orientation map and the Transmutation of Demonic Forces.

The Mandala relates to the largest structural processes as well as the smallest, to the macrocosm as well as the microcosm - it is the universe and the atom.

As stated by J. & M. Arguelles: "Universally inherent in man's consciousness, the Mandala has continually appeared in his constructions, rituals and art forms. From its various manifestations we can derive three basic properties:

a centre  
symmetry  
cardinal points..." 59

The Mandala is both art and magic, it is magic through art. As we scan the art forms of the world we find endless variations on the theme in many diverse cultures.

Stonehenge, for example, is a megalithic Mandala created by prehistoric man. A palaeolithic 'sunwheel' has been discovered in Rhodesia. The Aztec Sunstone or Mexican Calendar is over eleven feet in diameter, it is rich in symbology and metaphysics with its outer circle formed by two fire serpents representing light and darkness. The sand drawings used in the ceremonies of the Pueblo Indians are likewise of this type. The circular Sioux Indian ceremonial Sun Lodge is built with twenty-eight poles and a ridge pole at the centre. This pole represents the spirit at

the heart of the universe. The Mandala is to be found in many Celtic designs, in the symbol of the cross and the rose windows of cathedrals, in the ancient symbol of the swastika - reversed by the Nazis - and in heraldic forms such as the Tudor rose.

For the most interesting Mandalas we need to turn to the East: In ancient China it is embedded in Taoism and the Golden Flower. In India it may be found in the exquisite patterns in Jain temples and in the great Hindu temple of the Black Pagoda, built in the 13th century, with gigantic chariot wheels that were also sun symbols. From Nepal there are Mandalas in which triangles with a circle represent the sub-divided energy of the Great Goddess.

The most beautiful and intricate Mandalas come from Tibetan Buddhism - this tradition is now somewhat dispersed. Some of these designs are very elaborate indeed, using symbolic colours and thousands of interlocking forms. They are used for meditation. To meditate on the centre is to realise the eternal now, and now is all that will ever exist.

Jung, with his interest in the collective unconscious rediscovered the Mandala for the western world in "The Secret of the Golden Flower" and in his work with psychiatric patients. 60

Jung thought of the circle as symbolising nature or the or the cosmos as a whole, both the subconscious and the super-conscious. The square, another Mandala form-variant he saw as that which is projected by man and related to rational aspects. It was necessary for the two to be integrated in order to have the holistic view.

In "Education through Art" Herbert Read describes the tendency towards this type of design in the 'mind-pictures' of children. 61

The Mandala can be used for many purposes, including rituals, self-orientation, meditation, therapy, decoration and the Gestalt perception of relationships and patterns.

Because the Mandala implies a relationship between man and the cosmos it points the way towards inner harmony.

By considering one basic theme and its manifold forms of expression, something that might be called innate creativity emerges as a fundamental human attribute. The Mandala could well be used to show to a traveller from outer space: A symbol of how man sees himself.



## The Great Goddess or Great Mother

Another archetype, of special interest with reference to creativity, is that of the Great Goddess. The worship of the Goddess was an integral element in the culture of Europe in megalithic times, says E.O. James. <sup>62</sup> She was a significant influence from India to the Mediterranean, and evidence from archeology has revealed the unique position occupied by the Goddess throughout the ancient world. <sup>63</sup> In the ancient Indus Valley civilisation, for example, figures have been found in the ruins of many cities. Some of the female representations, says Leonard Cottrell, give birth to rivers and to plant life, denoting the broad powers of creation that usually belong to the mother goddess. <sup>64</sup>

Miriam and Jose Arguelles state that the primordial, all-accommodating spaciousness is the fundamental quality of the feminine. "For hidden deep within the all-embracing accommodation of this forebodingly majestic space, one recognizes the inspirational spark that gave birth to the archaic but timeless images of the Great Mother." <sup>65</sup> They are aware that uncovering the path of the feminine is an ongoing and inspiring experience, leading through labyrinthine routes. The labyrinth itself is an ancient configuration arising in the art of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete and Ireland. The present day Hopi Indians call their labyrinths "Mother Earth".

Many people, and by no means always and only men, are afraid of the existential, non-dualistic and non-conceptual awareness that is symbolised by spacious immensity. Such people feel safer with fixed points, secure boundaries, problems located within specific schemes and closed worlds. They try to escape from the terrifying goddess of the skies. Yet, behind their apprehension, they sense that the feminine quality of infinity may be depicted and personified as wisdom, as something deep, mysterious and all-pervading.

Here then is an archetypal image possessing strong links with the very nature of the creative unconscious and with an essential aspect of the creative process itself.

## The Art of the Pacific Northwest

Having roamed the world for variations of one image; it may now be helpful to view creativity from a distinctly local angle: To consider the art forms of people belonging to one specific culture.

The Indians of the Pacific Northwest are particularly suitable: Seven linguistic groups share a common culture. They inhabited a region along the shore, stretching thirteen hundred miles from the Alaskan panhandle down to the Columbia River. They have represented one of the most artistic cultures of the tribal world.

It is interesting to speculate on why these people have been so productive and in such an imaginative way. A number of factors seem to contribute: Firstly, they evolved an economy providing plenty of leisure time. The sea became their main source of food. There were several varieties of fish, shell fish and water mammals. In the spring and summer they fished, they preserved the food and were free for the long winter months. A very limited amount of agriculture was practiced in the form of tobacco growing. They had a plentiful supply of wild berries. The dense vegetation of cedar, fir and spruce provided their raw material for their houses and tools.

Apart from their convenient abundance and free time, they developed a mythology linked with elaborate ceremonials demanding varied artistic expression.

There was an estimated 70,000 people living within the tribal boundaries at the end of the eighteenth century when the first Europeans arrived.

They believed that their primal ancestors had been given special privileges by myth people: The supernatural beings of earth, sea and sky. In the sky, for example, lived the Thunderbird, and there were great houses and stairways descending to earth. In the sea there were supernatural fish and sea monsters. There was also an underworld of Ghost people.

Some of the privileges to be handed down to their descendants took the form of property. In the northern groups the property was inherited through the maternal line; in the south, mainly through the paternal line. The tribal groups were organised according to social rank. The potlatch was a very important social occasion relating to the establishment of social claims.



The potlatch was a ceremonial feast, involving the giving of presents and hospitality, the validating of privileges and the public assertion of claims to heraldic crests. Totem poles displaying the clan and personal animal-human symbols were therefore erected.

During the winter dance season a whole village could take on the atmosphere of a pageant. There may be carnival displays, feasting, oratory, drama, singing, initiation ceremonies, spirit dancing, mimics, illusionist activities associated with the myths and elaborate rituals.

A large part of the strength and psychological impact of the Northwest Coast art derives from the conviction aspect. The people really believed in the essential truth of their nature-inspired myths.

All this implies fantastic scope for the visual arts. Many people would be required to work as artists, and some were obviously more gifted than others. It was as if art, magic and craftsmanship were one. It is interesting to note that these tribes had no specific word meaning art. Artistic activities were so interwoven into their lives that they were not seen as a special or separate function.

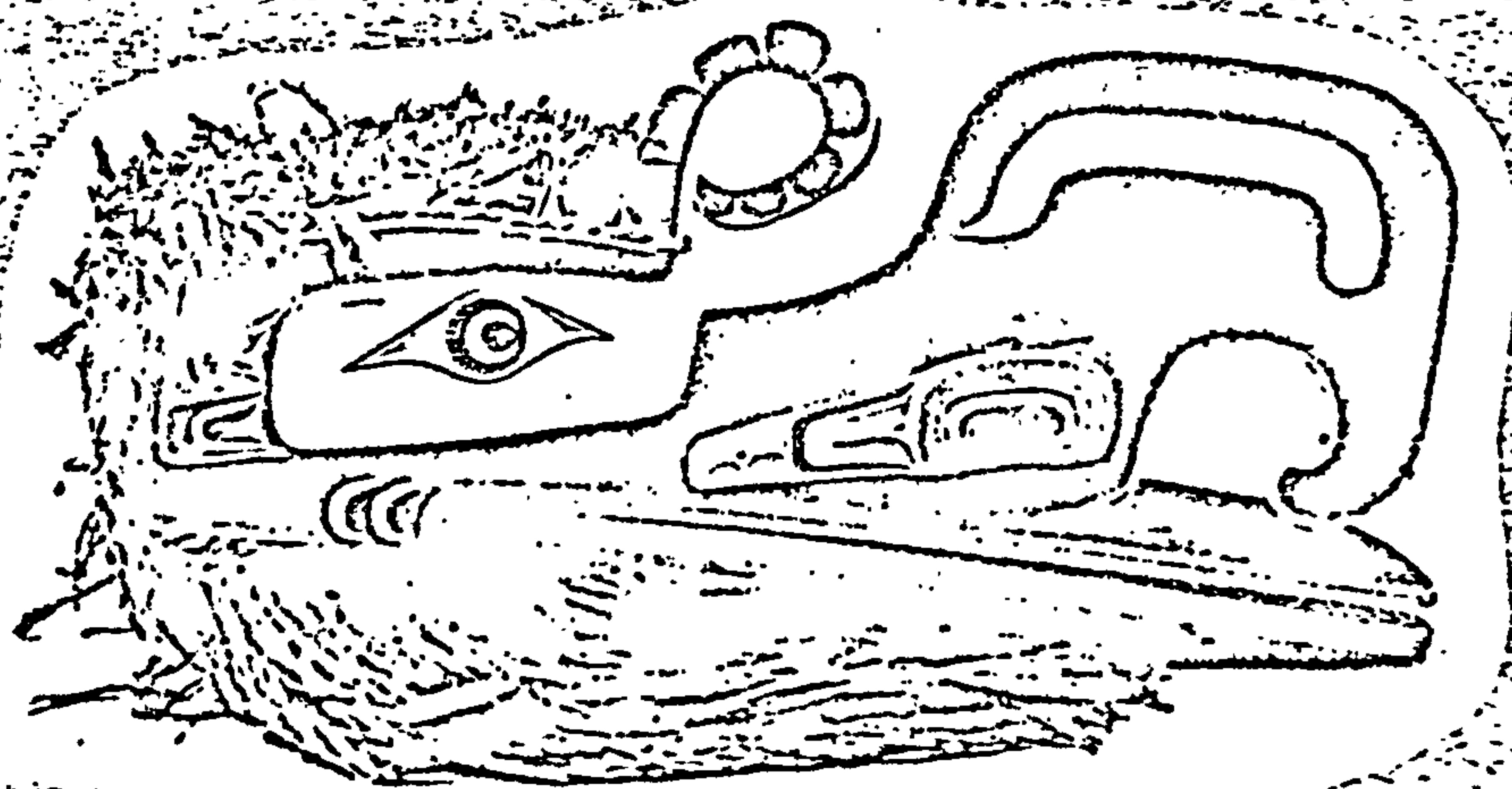
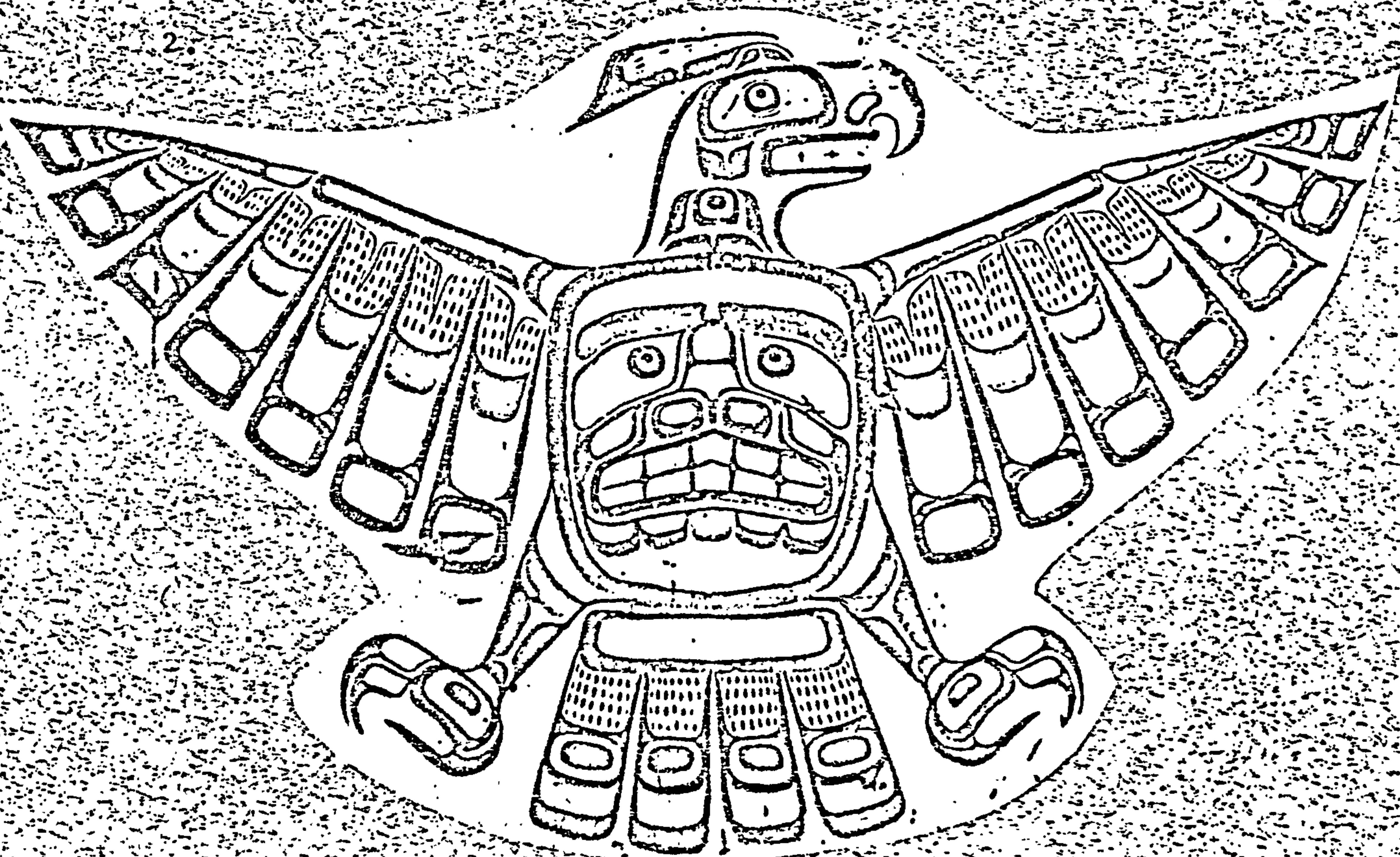
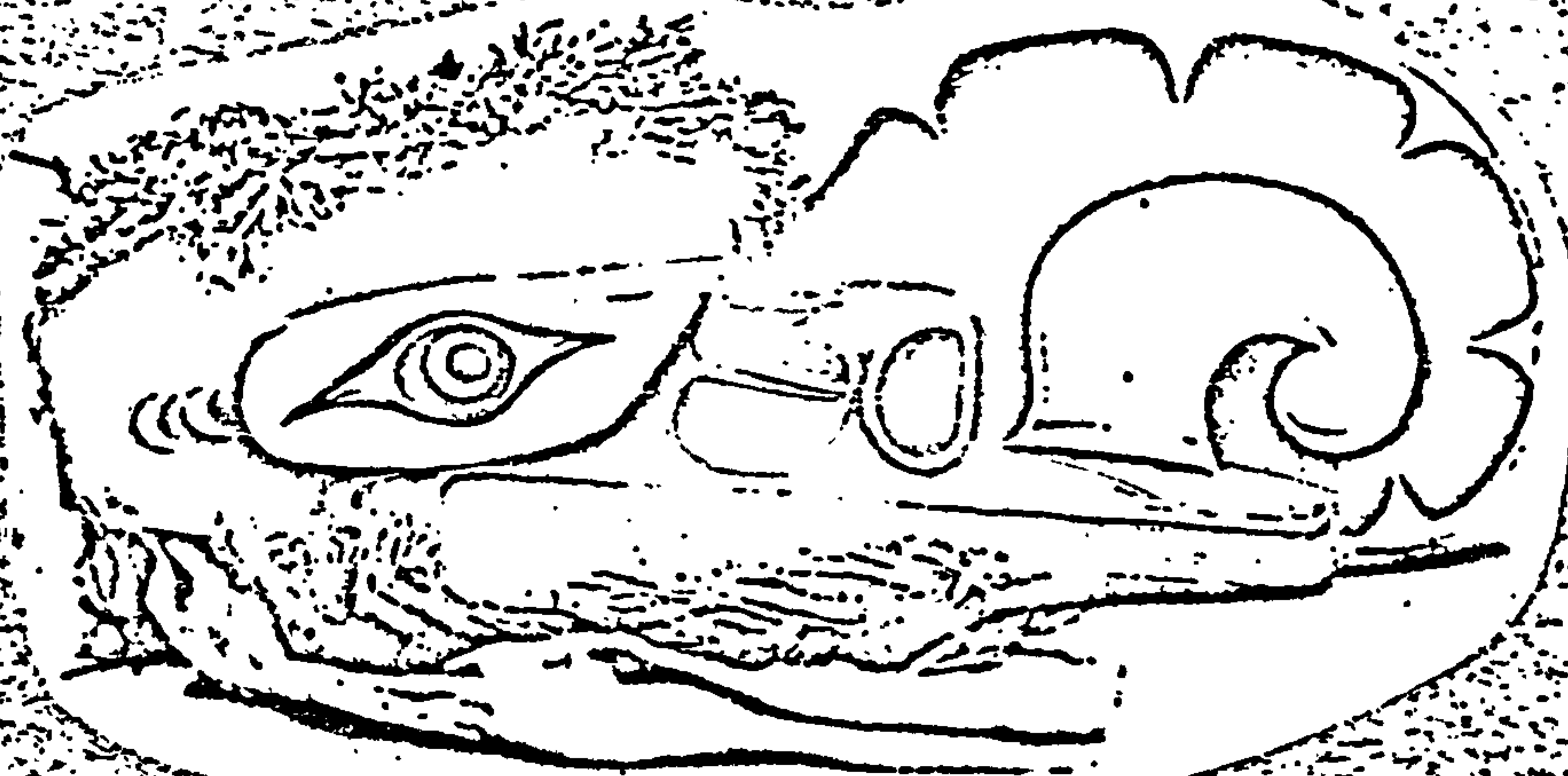
In looking over the hundreds of photographs from the University of British Columbia and the Portland Art Museum, 66&67 Oregon, one receives a very strong impression of highly imaginative work and a high degree of vitality. Special mention should be made of "Sacred Circles", the Two Thousand Years of North American Indian Art, the Exhibition organised by the Arts Council in 1976. It was as if the Hayward Gallery had been built to house the exhibits: The stark, grey, vast and modern setting for the stark, colourful, powerful and primitive art.

In the Catalogue it states quite simply: "Some of the world's finest sculpture originated on the Northwest Coast of North America,...." 68

The range of art objects produced by these tribes is itself stimulating: There are masks of eagle, raven, bird-monster, crooked-beak, dog, bear, otter, wolf, killer whale, thunderbird, sun, moon, sleeper and buffoon. There are ceremonial skulls, cedar bark headdresses, dance aprons and woven blankets worn as cloaks. There are the magnificently carved totem poles, heraldic



- 1&3 Kwakiutl Crooked-Beak masks in wood and cedar bark; black, white and red.
2. Kwakiutl ceremonial curtain. Cotton with Thunderbird motif in black. Width: 18ft. 7in.





posts and model canoes, ceremonial staffs, weapons and harpoons. Many examples of seal-shaped feast dishes and a colossal dish in the form of a stylised human figure - a great hollowed out log from which a variety of foods could be served.

Because ancestry was based on mythology about animals, the people felt a close relationship to the animals and used them as decoration on their houses, clothes and utensils. Sometimes they used a symbolic presentation, perhaps a beaver would be represented by the large incisor teeth and a large tail. Sometimes the characteristics would be combined, a wolf would become a sea wolf with flippers. A mask that was part man and part bird would be considered more potent in terms of magic on account of the dual features.

Important elements were sometimes enlarged for emphasis, stylised eyes were used at joints in a design and even whole animals may be inserted within the body of a large animal.

Throughout the range of art objects there is the perfect blend of form and function. There is elaboration without confusion and flamboyance without vulgarity. The patterns are as lively as anything produced by Picasso, whether they be of an abstract nature or developed from the observation of animals. A sense of cultural unity is apparent, yet there is scope for originality. An amazing quality of craftsmanship is combined with a sensitive use of local materials: A killer whale design may be painted on a twisted spruce root hat; a raven mask made of wood, seaweed and bark; a chief's headdress made of wood, shell, ermine and sea lion whiskers.

Differences in style may be observed between, for example, the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian tribes in the northern group and the bold forms of the Bella Coola and the Kwakiutl tribes of the Central Northwest. In the Kwakiutl areas there has been a great development of secret societies, involving ritual carving associated with the ceremonies.

Kwakiutl style may be described as expressionist with the violent use of colour, the distortions of forms and the visually explosive qualities. Complex masks often open up or have interchangeable parts for dramatic dances.

Hybrid styles are often found on account of cultural exchanges between the tribes.



From the Rasmussen Collection of the Portland Art Museum

8. *Ceremonial Shirt. Scarlet Flannel with a Shark Design. Tlingit.*





European contact was established in the 18th century. At first this contact meant an increase in wealth for the Indians by the trading in furs. This new wealth accelerated the development of the economy and more carvings, totem poles and art objects were produced. There was also the opportunity to use new materials such as cloth, beads and copper. People that had shown great ingenuity in designs using the porcupine quill may now turn to bead-work. However, as time went by many Indian customs were frowned upon, the potlatch was outlawed by the Canadian law and villages became dependent on commercial fishing. Under these conditions the arts declined and by 1900 suffered greatly. The Kwakiutl managed to carry on an unbroken tradition. The work of contemporary artists is much sought after by collectors. 69

Reference to a culture of this kind illustrates a number of important points about the nature of creativity. There are also a number of important lessons for art education and for society to be discussed later. \*

\* Reference to this subject was made in the M.Ed. dissertation: "Creative Art Education for Adults", 1976, pp. 30-34. The theme has been developed further here since visiting the exhibition "Sacred Circles".



## Creativity and Education

Teachers of art are by no means agreed on how the subject should be taught. They range from those who believe in an explicit and structured way of approach at one extreme to those who rebel against the idea of the teacher as a performer at the other end of the scale. The latter group use subtle, indirect and unobtrusive strategies in order to build up an atmosphere. It would seem that they are the ones most interested in the creative process.

Two pioneers of creative art education for children paved the way for greater freedom and flexibility and should be mentioned: In 1897 Franz Cizek opened an art class in Vienna which carried on for forty years. He said: "I teach children by not teaching at all in the accepted sense...." When asked what he did, he replied: "But I don't do. I take off the lid and other art teachers clap the lid on." <sup>70</sup> Marion Richardson was another powerful influence on art education, in this case, in England during the first half of the 20th century. She said of creativity: "I could free it but I could not teach it." <sup>71</sup> When the pioneers said that they did not teach they were giving the word a wider meaning by their philosophy and methods.

In the adult field many influences may be observed, from the new freedom of 'Child Art' to the Bauhaus ideal linking art and craftsmanship through basic design. Through an artist such as Paul Klee, who taught at the Bauhaus, the stress on informality and discovery was apparent. There was the feeling that much might be achieved by direct communication with nature. Classes were held out-of-doors, under trees, by the river, with animals or on the mountains. This is related to a concern for the provision of appropriate conditions under which the creative potential of individuals may unfold. Ideally, a school or college building is only a base camp from which a series of journeys may be undertaken.

Ken Rowat, previously Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Leeds Polytechnic, says: "Whatever art might be, one thing is certain: it cannot be directed, planned, confined or measured." <sup>72</sup> The most exciting educational situations arise when the students not only find their own answers to problems, but find their own problems as well. Adventure is closely linked with creativity.



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## **CHAPTER II**

### **Creativity and the Art Student**



## Introduction

This chapter is concerned firstly with the personal experience of teaching art to mature students at a College of Adult Education. This is followed by a series of accounts of visits to art colleges:

Manchester Polytechnic, Foundation Course, Fine Art and Design Departments.

Leeds Polytechnic, Fine Art Department and observation of interviews.

Crewe + Alsager College of Higher Education, Faculty of Creative Arts.

Birmingham Polytechnic, School of Fine Art and especially the work of Joanna Digger.

The Royal College of Art.

Chelsea School of Art, Painting and Sculpture Departments.

St Martin's College of Art, Painting and Sculpture Departments.

Since the main reason for the visits being to discover ways in which creativity may be encouraged a summary of the findings is given. Reference is also made to the problems and blocks to creative expression that arise. The chapter ends with an account of a longitudinal study of problem finding in art in Chicago.



College of Adult Education Students working for 'O' & 'A' Level  
Qualifications in Art

From personal experience of eight years of teaching mature adults, it is possible to give some idea of how they may take the first steps towards creative expression.

The adults in question were aged between 18yrs.-50yrs. A typical example may be a woman in her mid-thirties with two or three children. When they first arrived many of the students had not done art before, or they had only been taught along formal lines.

Their general abilities tended towards the average range. Some were higher educational material; but perhaps they had not been stimulated at school, or they may have wasted their time or responded to other pressures. Later on they may have regretted the limitations of their lives and wanted to extend their horizons.

They were, on the whole, inclined to underestimate their abilities. At first they were rather apprehensive about their new situation. Basically, they were highly motivated since it takes courage to decide to change a life style.

If I had thought about it at the time, they were ideal material for an experiment in creative development. They were almost raw recruits and willing to persist with an educational process for a meaningful length of time, come what may. Paradoxically, they were rather passive, in the sense that they did not tell me what they expected the process would or should be like. They were prepared to trust the process in a way that showed true maturity. They were willing to experiment, because they knew - or gathered from my approach - that ingenuity and imagination were required for the examinations.



I found that with an 'O' Level Art class of about twenty students, after two months things were really happening. (They had two, two hour sessions per week and homework). Usually, around seventeen would be able to achieve a satisfactory level in terms of creative expression, perhaps half the class would be capable of producing really exciting pictures and one or two would show marked creative ability.

The students were often surprised at the way the subject would take a grip on them; the way they became totally absorbed for whole week-ends, neglecting everything else. It was as if the world came alive as a visual experience, rather than merely a utilitarian field of operation.

Perhaps there are as many ways of teaching or encouraging people to become creative as there are practitioners in the field. Perhaps atmosphere is more important than method. However, it may be useful if I outline my own method with regard to abstract art, as an example of a process of known duration with specific results.

#### Abstract Art and the Basic Elements

If I had told the students that an abstract picture is really a 'mind' picture, and asked them to produce a landscape from their minds; they would probably have been frustrated.

In one sense the mind is so full, it is difficult to decide what to use. On the other hand, the mind can go blank when it is faced with certain situations.

I have therefore found it helpful to isolate the basic elements concerned, giving a week to each, in the initial stage.

Colour and tone may be taken first. It is of course possible to study tone separately in terms of black, white and grey; but psychologically it is more stimulating for the students,



when they have just bought new paints, to plunge directly into colour: The fascinating science of colour, the spectrum range, harmonies, complementaries, discords, tints and shades, followed by experiments in the mixing of colours. Awareness of the power and beauty of colour may be achieved by looking at it in the most intense form, as transmitted light, perhaps the sun shining through stained glass or the way sunlight may transform green leaves into emeralds. A kinetic art object showing ever changing colours is very helpful. Art goes beyond rules and it is necessary for the student to respond in a personal way. Colour to the artist is a highly charged emotional subject. Colour rescued from content is free colour, but it is probably never completely divorced from some associations in terms of our world. This leads on to symbolism and the psychology of colour.

The whole subject may be linked with art history: Turner's late work, for example; Impressionism and especially Monet; Blue Rider Expressionism and Kandinsky's theories of colour and the link with pure musical sensation; Orphism, and the way Delaunay saw colour as form and subject.

A new world is revealed. After the first week it is almost impossible for a student to even stand at the bus stop without being conscious of it.

Secondly, the theme of line and rhythm may be considered. Lines are sometimes horizontal, wavy and restful; or they may be diagonal, jagged and energetic. These simple observations are essential to an understanding of abstract art. The students may be encouraged to collect objects with specific linear features. It is stimulating to picture a room overflowing with this type of selected material. There may be coils of metallic



waste from lathes, curling lengths of wool or string, rocks and pebbles showing veining patterns and particularly the banding designs in agates, pieces of wood with clear graining, feathers, leaf-skeletons, cross-sections of fruit and spiral shells, plants with twisted stems or corkscrew tendrils and the radiating gills of mushrooms. There may also be microphotographs revealing the linear mazes of plant cells, marine protozoa and nerve tissue.

Students have used the 'lines' in flowing water, the outlines of clouds or trees and the skyline of the city for their points of departure in abstraction.

Reference may be made to music, the sound of cats, the wind and a bird in flight, in order to draw attention to the way in which rhythm, noise and movement can be transferred into visual images.

A picture, such as Hokusai's "Hollow of the Deep Sea Wave", may be cited as an example of rhythm and movement expressed in visual terms.

At this point students need to consider how lines may be used to express moods and feelings - anger or peace. They need to select the most appropriate tools, to think about the types of pencils, crayons, chalks and brushes, the inks and paints and the surfaces of papers.

Lines have thickness, direction, quality and character arising from the choice of tools and the sensitivity of the artist.

With reference to the work of children, Florence Cane says that there is a value in physical, rhythmical exercises and that there is a transference of physical freedom to the work of art. "There is real value in encouraging children to make bold lines



and curves using the whole body." 1

Adults also stand to benefit from being bold and adventurous.

Logically, the third stage in the development of an understanding of abstraction would seem to be concerned with the relationships of shapes. The whole question of balance and harmony is involved. In moving from line to area new kinds of problems arise, such as dealing with mass or tonal weight, the scale of the shapes with reference to background, the linking of the shapes, the significance of the background areas that the shapes may create, the invention of interesting shapes and the technical difficulties associated with covering the areas themselves with paint.

Ideally, each of these problems could be considered in turn. However, with a course of this kind I found that only two weeks may be available. It follows that the learning process was very much intensified at this period.

The students were really learning how to compose. Composition is concerned with innovation, therefore with pure creative ability. Composition is concerned with interrelationships, superimposition, interpenetration and the re-echoing of shapes; all matters that are easier to deal with than the purely inventive aspect. I therefore decided to delay the more creative work until the second week. When students with perhaps only a limited visual vocabulary try to invent they may get into a rut, using endless variations on amoeboid patterns. So, for the first exercise I gave them the shapes; the circle and the triangle or the square and the rectangle. In this way they only had what might be called a juggling problem.

For the more inventive aspect I asked them to seek out everyday objects from home. They already knew that geometrical





Barbara Myers

Towards Abstraction - using a metallic lamp-shade  
and patterns of light and shadow as points of  
departure.



shapes have a simple, intrinsic beauty. They now needed to see an egg whisk or a tin opener in a new light. They needed to simplify or elaborate, enlarge, modify or distort the forms out of their objective existence. At this stage they were encouraged to translate the forms into flat pattern. Around this time they were in the process of discovering that the whole world may be regarded as raw material for the abstract artist.

Also around this time students were usually beginning to feel that they were on a road leading to creation and they became very excited. On one occasion a student asked a group of her friends round for coffee. To their amazement they were given paper and crayons and asked to make something out of a tin opener. She showed me the series later. Some of the pictures were like surrealist fantasies: There were dreamlike images of metallic-beaked birds and advancing armies of spiky dragons.

Of special interest to me was the fact that the student was perceptive enough to see that what I could do - in an apparently effortless way - with my students, she could do with her own friends, her students. In other words, some degree of creative ability is not very far below the surface in most people. It only requires a little playful assistance to draw it out.

Of course there are degrees of abstraction: From Realism to pure Subjectivism is really a continuum. In a sense one may alight at any station along the line. But abstract art may be roughly defined as the last quarter of the journey. The main problem is to get the students to travel far enough: 'See how much further you can carry that idea into the abstract' was a comment I often made during those eight years.

Another approach may be concerned with zooming in on a form. There are many cubist style patterns to be discovered in, for



example, the spaces between the branches of a section of a twig. Then further exploration may be made of the patterns lurking in a section of the section.

At this stage intensive visual stimulation is very helpful. This may include skeletons, shells, crystals, plants and engineering diagrams..

A fourth topic for consideration is texture. For this the students should observe and touch a variety of objects. The idea of a table for the display of textures may seem rather like the modern methods of teaching infants - crumpled leaves, spiky chestnut cases, smooth, shiny chestnuts, gnarled wood and knobbly gourds. Tactile qualities are important to the artist and there is probably something of the child in every artist. With abstract pictures the surface treatment, or texture should form an integral part of the idea, rather than something merely added on. Students need time to discover the various effects that may be achieved. They should improvise at home, not only with brushes and crayons, but with anything they find. One student produced some lively markings with a loofah. Abstract work is often enhanced by dragged brush, stippled, grained and sprayed effects. Pleasing effects result from the use of a tooth brush, for spattering, and masks for obtaining variations in shape and tone.

Finally, form should be mentioned. Not all abstract pictures are 'flat' pattern. Sometimes the illusion of the third dimension is required. A painting entitled "The Future" may require forms disappearing into the distance. Perspective in the normal sense is not needed. In a non-representational work forms may blend into the background, forms may be distorted and the idea of a single viewpoint may disappear. In this way





Vivienne E. Quigley

Insect Drama





Alice Rafferty

The Rainbow - Design in Nature



there is often the feeling of depth, but also of ambiguity.

An introduction to the basic elements of colour and tone, line and rhythm, harmony and relationships, texture, form and depth, may be said to take six weeks. It is then necessary for students to bring together a number of these elements in one picture. For this a list of titles may be welcome, as long as they are used to convey a mood, or hint at an idea, rather than for leading to obvious and explicit statements.

The following selection of titles gives some indication of the range of themes. Some of them are even names of race horses:

Fire and Water; The Haunted Tower; Cry for Freedom; Exotic Fantasy; The Enchanted Journey; Airborne; Day and Night; Green Goddess; Crazy Vegetation; Symphony in Purple; Magic Mirror; Break Free; Violence at the Centre; Impossible Journey; Neptune; Red Dance; Bridge of Dreams; Corridors of Time; Design in Nature; Insect Drama; Silver Serenade; Wild Echo; Swift Shadow; Rainbow; Double Sensation; Grey Mirage; Soaring Flight & Always Happy.

As the pictures came in, inspired by these titles, I found that informal displays for the purpose of group discussion were very useful. The students received a creative stimulus from seeing the work of other members of the class. It helped them to discover something of the range of possible interpretations.

### Collage

Another approach to imaginative work may be made through the use of collage techniques. In this alternative to painting, students used materials as varied as velvet,<sup>o</sup> tissue paper, seeds, string, pipecleaners, wasp paper, cuttle bone, steel wool, Venetian glass and the cast skins of snakes such as the boa or the python.

The students built up compositions, often of an abstract or fantastic nature, suggesting jungles, volcanoes or the dream world. One year they responded in a particularly creative way to a competition entitled: "The Edge of the Possible".





Ann Poulton

Underwater Fantasy





Ann Poulton

The Prawn



## Along the Borderline Between Abstraction and Representation

Sometimes I provided specimens as a starting point for compositions. For example: slices of peppers or tomatoes, sections through a cabbage, shells, prawns, solid fuels and wood shavings or coloured inks poured over metal foil in a glass jar. The students were encouraged to develop features of interest such as line, shape, growth or structure. They were asked to combine close study with the avoidance of a straightforward statement. This type of exercise tended towards the kind of pictures that represented a halfway stage between abstraction and the more direct observational work.

Some of the most creative ideas seem to arise from this blending of intense awareness of the 'real world' with an equally intense feeling for elaboration, exploitation and variations on a theme. One has only to think of what Barbara Hepworth made of a wave, what Henry Moore has done with pebbles and Graham Sutherland with thorn bushes.

## Examinations

At Christmas there was an examination, at Easter there was the 'Mock' examination and in June the G.C.E. examination itself. It might be thought that with so many examinations it would be difficult for the course to be really concerned with creativity. There is often criticism of examinations, for art especially. But provided the approach is flexible the examinations do not kill the creative spark. In fact the situation may be rather the reverse, as they tend to stretch the student. Nobody knows how creative they can be until they have been extended. Examinations are one of the ways by which student motivation may be reinforced.

Of course everything depends on the nature of the



examinations and what the examiners are looking for. Many art examinations tend to be rather flexible these days.

The G.C.E. Ordinary Level Art composition paper for 1975, from the J.M.B., may be taken as an example: The paper was issued about three weeks in advance, and in Section A it stated: "If you choose a question or subject from this section your treatment may be of any character you wish - figurative or non-figurative, representational or non-representational, etc.

1. Make a composition based on one of the following:

- (a) With Flags and Banners.
- (b) Figures on the escalator.
- (c) The fountain.
- (d) Collection.
- (e) Gathering together."

There was a choice of another four imaginative titles in this section.

At a meeting arranged by G.C.E. examiners in Manchester in the early 1970s the following attitudes emerged:

1. A liberal approach to the work.
2. Questions such as 'eggs' or 'Scaffolding' should be regarded as starting points.
3. The examiners may not be looking for anything in particular, evidence of adventure and creative enjoyment important.
4. Art people are not rigid, they are open-minded and not eager to give specific instructions.
5. Some measure of freedom is desirable rather than students following a set formula.
6. Examiners not anxious to display examples of G.C.E. work, in case people may think that only this type of art is wanted.
7. Examiners cannot possibly know what they want in advance in art. The main advice to students is for them to show a sensitive response and that they have been extended in some way.



## The Advanced Level Art

I have rather concentrated on the 'O' Level work, because I wanted to give an account of a method of encouraging creative development from the initial stages.

However, it should not be thought that the 'A' Level classes were less interesting. In fact they were even more exciting in terms of deeper creative involvement. They are less easy to describe in general terms: There was usually less overt class teaching and a more subtle, individual type of guidance and stimulation.

Teaching art is really teaching for freedom. It is of fundamental importance that conditions must be provided for the students to do the unexpected.

If the teacher selects the problem and explains the means what are the students to do?

If you want the unexpected to happen its no use over-structuring or the predictable will happen.

Certainly, there had to be some structure, but it was not imposed, it grew out of an individual's personal requirements.

If there were an average of ten or twelve people in an advanced level class, there were likely to be the same number of approaches. But one thing all the students had to learn - and it in no way interfered with their creativity - and that was to spend up to twelve hours on one large picture.

Often, the preliminary studies for a painting would require excursions to sources of inspiration. For example, visits were made to the aquarium of a zoo for "Underwater Fantasy" material and to the greenhouses of the university for ideas relating to "Botanical Wonderland".

The students had six hours per week of art at the advanced

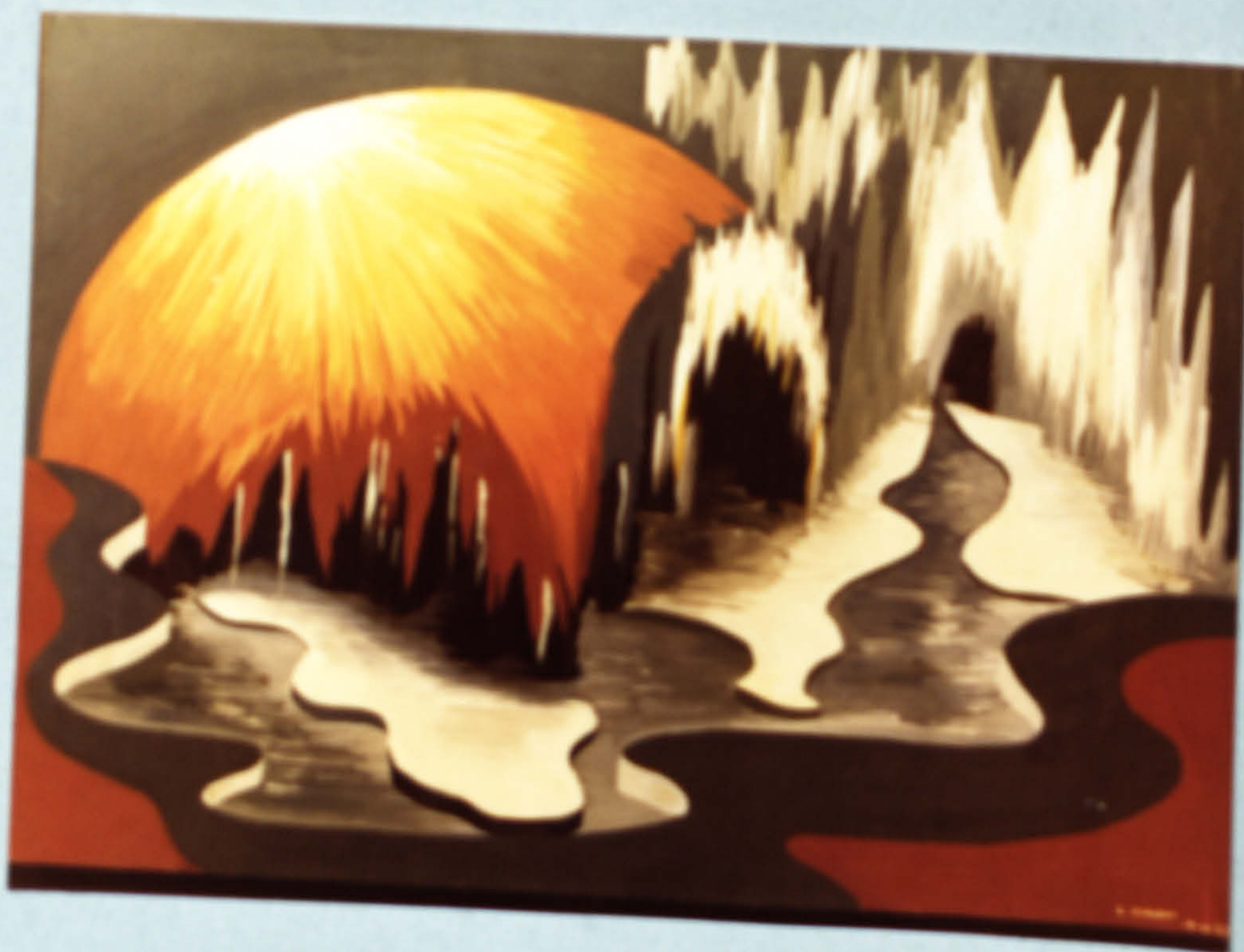




Pauline E. Quinn

Zoological Wonderland





Louise H. Vincent

A Sunny Pleasure Dome with Caves of Ice



stage, usually 2hrs. each for imaginative composition, the observational work and the written topics related to the appreciation of art and art history. This gave time for the students to form an integrated group. From September until the examinations the following June they became like an art club, sharing ideas, enthusiasms, problems and in fact their whole philosophy of life. I was always a part of the total group experience, never someone apart.

There was the opportunity for coffee breaks together, sherry at the Cafe Royal, visits to art exhibitions in London and Liverpool as well as Manchester. There were evening meals out together and intense discussions until midnight.

When the time came for the examinations, the composition paper was issued three weeks beforehand, to allow opportunity for the preliminary studies; Then twelve hours for the work itself, within a further three week period.

Most students found scope for creative expression within this framework, indeed the examination composition was often their best painting.

The following list represents a selection of titles and themes given by myself for interpretation during the course. Some were intended for abstract work, as paintings or collages, others could be used in a surrealist or imaginatively realistic way, according to the preferences of the students:-

The Haunted Garden.

Lunar Adventure.

Red Horizon.

Dream Temples.

Cascading and Exploding Forms.

Red Symphony.

"The Universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose."

J.B.S. Haldane.



"It was a miracle of rare device,

A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!"

S.T. Coleridge.

"Tyger Tyger burning bright,

In the forests of the night!"

W. Blake.

The Secret Valley.

One mile beyond Hell.

Double Sensation between Sleeping and Waking.

Neon Domes and Tubes.

Zoological Wonderland.

Coloured Candles.

Magic City.

Germination and Growth.

Movement through Red towards Blue.

Excitement.

I also used paragraphs for visual interpretation, such as:

The Cave: Despite my violent reaction I glided down, down, down ...

The New Island in the North Atlantic: "Flashes of lightning lit up the eruption cloud and peals of thunder cracked above our heads ..."

S. Thorarinsson.

#### A Selection of Titles from the G.C.E. Advanced Level Examinations

Danse Macabre.

Time Machine.

Chess.

Aces and Kings.

Brass theme, with percussion backing.

Power Unit.

Deep Dive.

Germinating Forms.

Slot Machine.

Close-up.

Free-fall.

Exotic Plants.

Permutation.

Arabesque.

Uncontrolled Atomic Power.

Winter Forms.

The Vortex.



Magic City

1. Margaret Crolla
2. Lynda McCann

The work of two students with very different styles is shown overleaf. They both tend towards a poetical type of abstraction. Margaret's painting suggests an interest in visual impact; Lynda is concerned with the expression of feeling through tactile qualities.

Both students show signs of personal conviction and originality. Nevertheless, Margaret had probably looked at photographs of Middle Eastern air-port architecture and Lynda's approach owes something to Van Gogh's Starry Night.

Margaret's Magic City is 'out there', to some extent. Lynda's painting suggests a city within the self, or symbolically, not of this world.









Representational Art

Eileen Berry





Personal Study      Title Page



### Advanced Level Written Work

Until after 1971 the students sat a 3 hrs. examination on the History and Appreciation of Painting; answering such questions as: Can we blame the artist if his attitude and work reflects the madness and horror of his time? and Choose one period, of about a decade, which you believe to be the most important in the development of twentieth-century art. Explain the reasons for your choice and name those artists and works particularly identified with the period.

In 1972 the Personal Study was introduced as an alternative, offering the opportunity for a four thousand word investigation into a topic related to the syllabus. The studies were made between October and March and involved visits to art galleries and the collection of appropriate illustrations. The subjects chosen included, for example, "A study of the influences of war on artists"; "The motivations of the art of Marc Chagall"; "Behind the Eyes: Kandinsky". The material was gathered together and placed in a file, rather like a short book. In fact one student made the remark: "Here is myself" as she handed in her efforts. The title page of Pauline Quinn's Personal Study on "Expressionism and Der Blaue Reiter" (1974) made a lively introduction to the topic.

One of the most sophisticated Personal Studies was called: "Subjective and objective illusionism in art" by Susan Mison.

She described it as a subjective analysis of objective reality illustrated by: "1. Optical distortions by artists with apparent and full visual and mental facilities, e.g. M.C. Escher. 2. The effect of psychosomatic disturbances on the product in art, e.g. Van Gogh. 3. The influence of drugs on visual experience."



The Manchester PolytechnicFoundation Course      30/11/77

On the occasion of this visit it was possible to wander round a whole range of rooms arranged for a wide variety of workshop experiences. One student said that she had been told by a tutor that she would n't see a pencil during her first week, because it was important to understand that initial training in art must be exploratory and unexpected. Groups of students were learning about processes such as etching and screen printing. Some were following the theme of 'Persian Carpet' designs. There were opportunities for experimentation in colour: Vermeer's "A Maid-servant Pouring Milk", was being used as the starting point for abstract compositions in orange, yellow and blue. There was evidence that an exhibition currently running in the main hall was providing a source of inspiration - Bernat Klein the designer and his work. Bernat Klein is fascinated by the tension and excitement of red, by the extravagant shapes of Parrot Tulips and by the sequence way of working - through, for example, photograph, painting, tapestries, weaves, prints and on to clothes and furnishings. There were collages inspired by Bernat Klein and those students with an interest in textures were making fabric moths and butterflies. Another group had spent four days around the Central Railway Station and their work ranged from glass themes and broken window patterns to sketches of pigeons. There was also evidence of controlled drawing with interesting vegetables and fruits such as leeks and pomegranates being used.

On the subject of creativity, one student said that he thought of it as something you pull out of your own head. He described the ideal art studio as a palace of peace and serenity -almost like a monastery.



The Manchester PolytechnicFine Art Department1975

The fine art is conducted in an annex. The building is like a factory or workshop. Many of the students operate in large, individual areas, mainly without windows. The general impression is of being cut off from an awareness of day or night, the weather, the seasons and the larger environment.

On this particular afternoon a group of first year students were producing 'self-portraits'. One student said that her early life had been very sad, and so she was making a huge tear drop. It consisted of a tear-shaped black plastic frame filled with metallic foil. Another student was painting a game of snakes and ladders over a human shape, as this was how she saw her future. In fact both students expressed anxieties about their future.

The second year students of painting and sculpture were following individual lines of exploration: One student was relating biological forms and cell structures in particular to architectural themes. The experiments were being carried out in wax, polythene and burnt paper. Another student was painting a series on the theme of 'Reflections'. Yet another student was using the human form, and by a process of gradual distortion, she was creating landscape and abstraction.

In the sculptural area there were casts of the human form in the process of development, fantastic religious figures, abstract structures in wood and displays using polystyrene, rugs, piano keys, cloth houses and spring mattresses.

A third year student had made a large mushroom of various materials, showing the gills in layers of cloth. She said that



she saw the Department as a 'mushroom world'. —

The first year arrangements had been changed. They had been very free and they were modified to place the emphasis on basic drawing. One of the third year students, with some experience of the free approach, said that it was so open that she had been bewildered, but that now she felt it had gone too far in the other direction.

Just where overt teaching should fit into creative art education and how much there should be are difficult questions. Every college has its own solution, but one feels that they are temporary solutions and it is desirable that this should be the case. It would be unimaginative to think there could be a final statement in this field.

17/11/77

On the occasion of this visit the first year degree students in sculpture were working on a set theme: 'Joshua 10'. Here there was scope for many imaginative constructions: war, destruction, the five kings of the Amorites, the cave and the great stones:

"And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.

And there was no day like that before it or after it, ..."

The students were not expected to work in an obviously derivative way, but to make what might well be described as a creative response. One student, for example, had piled up blocks of concrete, and she was in the process of draping pieces of sacking and pouring wet plaster over the blocks. This, she said, was to show how something very strong and



powerful could be ruined by something apparently soft and weak.

In the first year painting course the students were exploring colour, and the walls were singing with their work. There were displays of coloured forms for them to use as a point of departure for their abstract experiments with hues and tones.

One student said that she was having difficulty observing and mixing the whole range of reds in the display. However, it was a difficulty offering a challenge and excitement. It was a new world for her, and yet a world she realised had been there all the time. In the early stages creativity is often discovery rather than invention. In the arts perhaps there is not such a line of demarcation between discovery and invention as there may be in the sciences.

The tutor said that the first year students were given these structured exercises to introduce them to the language of colour, form, texture and relationships. This was planned in the hope that they would apply their knowledge in an individual way in the following years.

The second year students had sheltered retreats in which to create, display their ideas and working drawings and collect their materials and sources of stimulation. This could well be important, not only physically, but also psychologically.

One student was working on a theme related to a photograph she had taken of a window and a ledge with a tiger cowrie shell and an apple. One could see her drawings following through to her large painting in oils. There was something almost classical about the calm sense of proportion and the subtle tones, the balance and the severity. But perhaps there was also a hint of surrealism in her Magritte-like statement. There was a feeling of poetry too, with the shell at one end of the horizontal



canvas and the apple at the other. This was not unlike the way Paul Nash worked, using simple objects or organic forms as 'personages'. It was as if there was a tension between the two forms, a magnetic force or communication. It was both haunting and enigmatic. Painting in this way is creative, there is a hint of the unknown, the mysterious and the uncertain within the apparently known, obvious and certain.

Another student was working on a series of pictures, using a set of playing cards as the spring-board for his ideas. He was painting on a large canvas, black marks against a textured white background. He explained that the idea had evolved from the cards. Some of his earlier studies of sequences of cards showed the clubs and spades losing their specific identities, becoming very simple black marks. This kind of work may be described as creative because there is a feeling of growth, an evolution of an idea through a number of stages. Each stage may be interesting in itself, as well as leaving the way open for further developments.

Another student had experimented with a series of 'spattered' pictures using a toothbrush. She was following a pointillist technique, skillfully juxtaposing the coloured dots to suggest the third dimension.

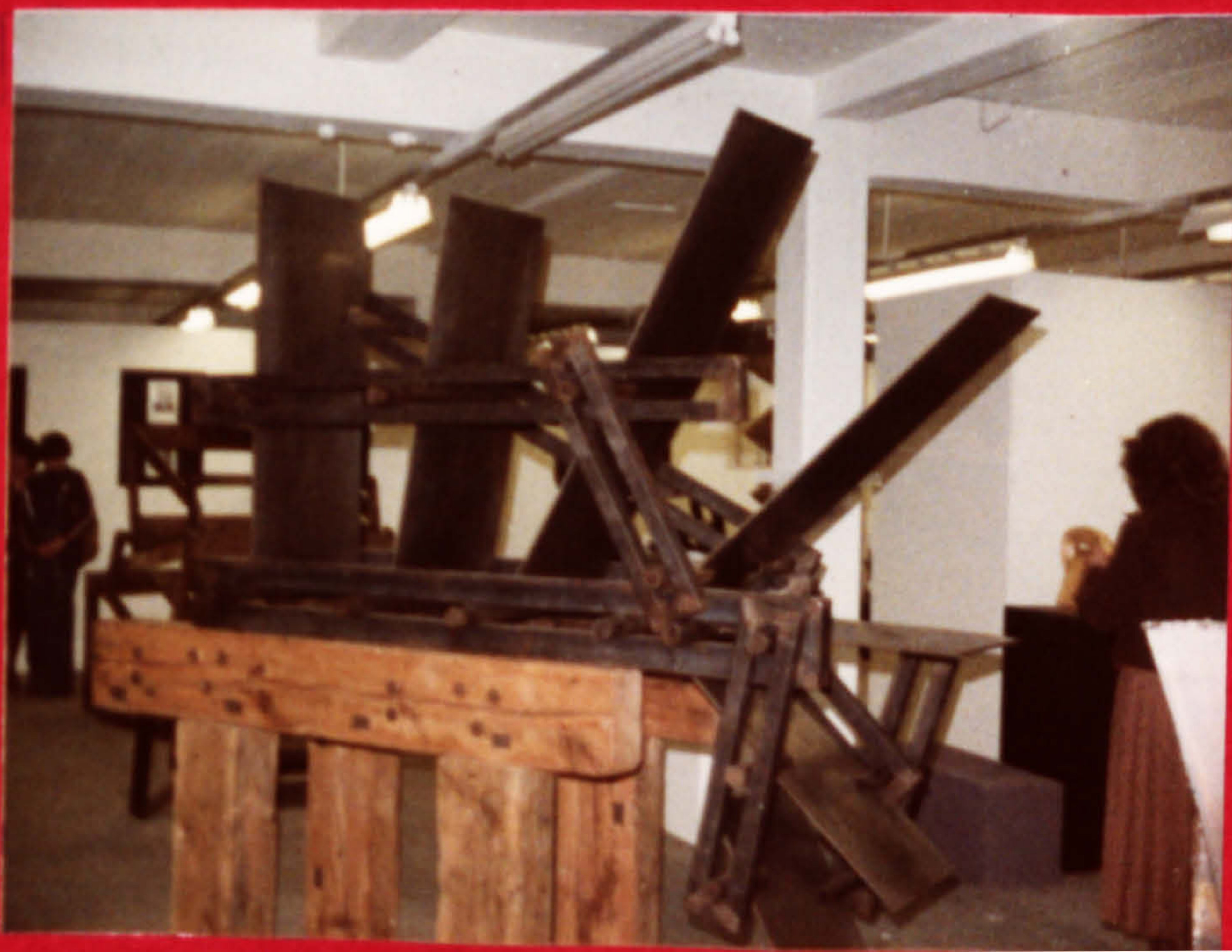
All the second year students said that they were given the freedom to pursue their own ideas, using whatever materials they wished, taking whatever time they required. Freedom was also apparent in the method of approach; some were using masses of sketches, others taking a more direct route.

The tutors appeared to be giving advice and guidance rather than directions. This would seem to be pedagogically correct, regarding the students as travellers and offering help with their very personal journeys.





Manchester Polytechnic  
Fine Art  
Degree Show 1978





26/6/78

The Degree Show

71

Painting, Fine Prints and Sculpture

The pictures in the exhibition ranged from the rather severe type of geometrical abstractions to the very free-flowing kind of work with the emphasis on dazzling colour relationships. One student had experimented with plank-like forms criss-crossing in a whole series of striking paintings and photographs. Another student used endlessly re-echoing diagonal lines in vivid greens. One series of abstracts had a chair, stool and deck-chair painted to match!

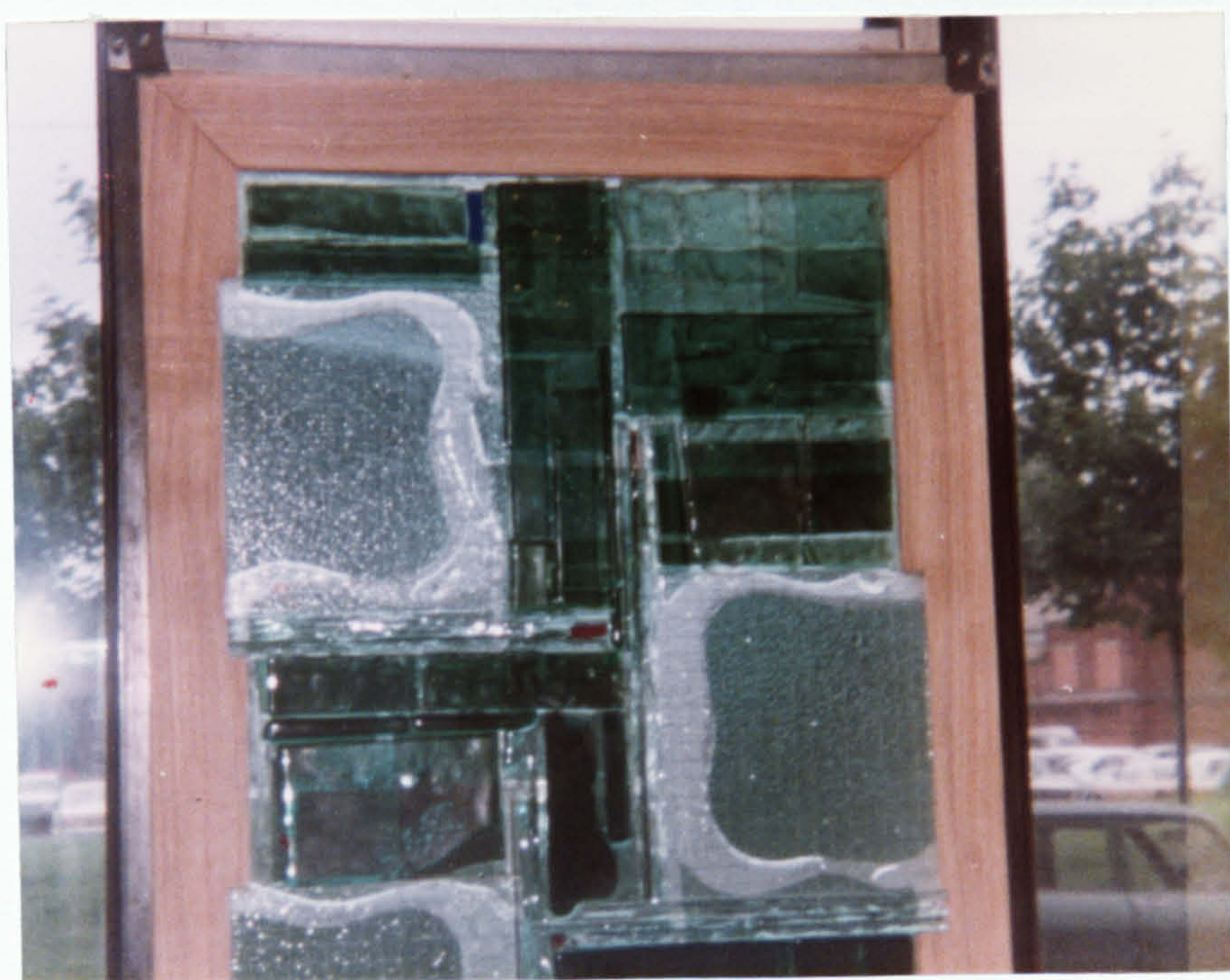
Some of the representational work was delightfully free: there was a painting suggesting the laburnum archway at Bodnant, a huge hanging basket and a scene hinting at the mood of Monet's water lilies. There were prints of dogs depicted as machine parts and clever figures in collage conveying movement, almost like robots.

In contrast to the very colourful pictures, many of them very large and adventurous; the sculpture seemed somewhat quiet. There was no sign of bright colours in this area of the show. However, the forms were most interesting: One display consisted of wooden abstractions, beautifully grained, rounded and intertwined. There were fan like spiral forms offering differing impressions from every angle. There were structures in wood and metal suggesting towers or early machinery.



A Visit to the Manchester Polytechnic B.A. Degree Show -Interior Design15/6/79

Creative imagination was combined with specialised craftsmanship in wood, metal, ceramics and glass at this show. The displays ranged from furniture to jewellery and goblets. In ceramics there were tiles, fantastic figures, Indian heads, giraffes in trucks, shell-like forms, abstract shapes and endless variations on the vessel, including complete coffee sets. In glass the work of Elizabeth Ryder was particularly exciting.



E. Ryder



Manchester PolytechnicMarch, 1979Wood, Metal and Ceramics Course

The tutor in charge of this course said that he thought a good foundation course was very important. Students coming onto the B.A. course direct from school were so much less mature and less developed artistically. He thought it important that they should have time to think of themselves as artists before they became designers.

Interviews for the B.A. course usually took half an hour. It had been found that two people doing the interviewing was probably the ideal number, or students might be intimidated. The students were required to bring their work and this gave the interview an informal character. There was an interest in seeing, not only work done as part of projects related to the foundation courses, but also sketch books and spare time drawing, painting and general topics. The department looked for signs of lively imagination, creative inventiveness, basic artistic skills and character and dedication. Creative potentiality may be something difficult to describe in words, but if it is present it can be recognised. If a student wants to become a designer, using wood, metal or clay, he needs to understand that the imaginative aspect is only part of the task. Actually producing the object requires hard, dedicated work. This is the reason why qualities of character are significant. A student needs to have the kind of determination likely to surmount difficulties.

It is assumed that anyone applying to a three dimensional area of study will not mind learning the practical skills and getting their hands dirty in the process. Once accepted a student has the chance of exploring all the three materials in the first year, selecting two in the second year and specialising in the



third year. The tutor said that, given time, almost anyone could be taught a practical skill such as throwing a pot. The creative aspect probably could not be taught. That is something an individual has to be born with. However, it is regarded as the responsibility of the department to develop the creative potential of the students. To some extent this may be done in the design field by planning projects in order to specifically encourage imaginative growth. Elements such as form, feeling for texture or decorative features can be incorporated in the basic requirements of these projects. Without the inherent creative drive a student would be useless on a course of this kind. He would soon become bored, merely able to go through the motions of the process. Normally, by the third year students are really working as individuals, though originality does not have to mean the creation of a totally new object. Students may be refining the form of a teapot or a chair in relation to function.

On looking round the department it was possible to see the design rooms and workshops where the students were learning to use a whole range of tools related to the shaping of wood, metal and clay. The exciting processes of glass-blowing and jewellery making could be observed as well as the creation of ceramic forms and furniture.

#### Department of Industrial Design - Engineering

The tutor in charge of this department said that there was a strong emphasis on creativity, innovation and inventive ability and also on knowledge and skill. He said that there were many differing views about the value of foundation courses and that they tended to be geared towards fine art. He seemed mainly concerned about the problem of the specific function of the polytechnic as distinct from that of the university. He asked



the question: "What is research in design - does anybody know?"

He said that the BA students studied mechanical and electrical engineering, plastics and polymer science. There could be no easy route to the acquiring of practical skills and true craftsmanship, time and dedication were important. Students were concerned with refining existing forms more often than creating completely new products. There was often the problem of trying to make something safer or cheaper. A TV camera, for example, may cost £8,000, could somebody design it for half the cost?

The department offered the opportunity for further study, and there was an M.A. course. Here the difficulty arose of what a thesis should be like on such a practical subject as industrial design. Perhaps it would be more helpful if students went out into industry for a while after their first degree and returned for advanced study at a more mature stage in their understanding of the subject. Although they may not always realise it in industry and the commercial world, it is from students following such courses that innovation is likely to come.



Leeds PolytechnicDepartment of Fine Art18/5/78

Ken Rowat, a previous senior lecturer in fine art at Leeds Polytechnic, made the following observation regarding the art education situation in general: "...very few tutors have any significant insight or knowledge concerning the nature of the creative impulse and its development in various personality types. Thus they are incapable of spotting potential at interview or of nourishing talent when it makes its first vulnerable appearance." 2

From this remark one might gather that perhaps Leeds fine art tutors were interested in trying to remedy this situation. The Leeds Department has in fact something of a reputation for being interested in the creative impulse.

It is not altogether surprising to find the following statement in the Review:

"In recent years it has become increasingly apparent that interviewing applicants is of utmost importance and that a department like this which is open-ended and which always receives a large number of applicants must be very clear about the factors involved. It is important to accept only students likely to thrive in our particular climate and to refer those, even if talented, who would develop better elsewhere. We have tried to improve our interviewing technique each year; at present we use two teams of three or four staff and a student representative, each team as far as possible being balanced e.g. painter/sculptor hawk/dove, and we look for self-motivation, ideas, compulsion, potential rather than craft skills or derivative polish. The outcome of this intensive operation spread over two or three



weeks obviously has a strong bearing on the operation and success of the course." 3

The same report gives the aims and objectives with special reference to the development of the creative personality:

"Basically the student will pursue the experiential study of art; with imagination, invention and a growing specialist knowledge as the main implements. In the terms of the individual's development as an artist this means providing a range of experience relevant to the concept of creativity. This platform combined with the tutorial system, will allow for the emergence of artists and the education of creative individuals manifesting their creativity in their activities and the works they produce. Flexibility allows for the possibility of students equating their activities with the society in which they live."

When two of the tutors were asked about their philosophy and methods for encouraging the growth of creativity, they were quick to say that they had not got a philosophy or a method. However, this is not as negative as it sounds. They really meant that they had not anything that could be pinned down and structured. But very definite denials are themselves an indication of a philosophy and a method. Perhaps they had a type of philosophy based on freedom and a method designed to allow the concept of freedom to enjoy its maximum scope of expression.

In the course of the discussion the tutors referred to the importance of accepting the diversity of the students' ideas; of delighting in waiting and being surprised and of their awareness of the many types of creativity. One of them said that he often advised the students to avoid developing along a straight line, to be prepared to adventure round corners and welcome ambiguity.

They said that no two students were alike so they could not have



plans for them in advance.

However, during the course of the visit, it emerged that the department operated a flexible tutorial system, with the second year students able to choose their own tutor. It was as if something of the intellectually creative atmosphere of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had been transplanted and adapted to the aesthetic sphere.

It was possible to wander round the department and talk to the students. Although the Polytechnic building itself was the usual austere and clinical kind of thing apparently so much liked by architects, the fine art department had been modified into a 'human-centred' area. In some ways the department was not unlike a ship. The main studio area was partially divided by large screens, a flight of steps led to the 'upper deck' with its large cabins for the 1st and 2nd year students.

One of the third year students said that there was no signing in or set time requirements, but many students became so deeply involved that they often worked in the evenings and also sometimes at week-ends.

One student was working on a large abstract picture, another was making a beautifully simple crouching figure in alabaster, a third was experimenting with shadows and a fourth painting dark horizontal lines to represent music. Yet another student was trying on a knitted form, with the sleeves ending in animal heads. She said that as she related to the body this kind of 'sculpture' was the most appropriate for her purpose. She had been out in one of her forms, perhaps to demonstrate the links between art, performance and fun, or to set people wondering!

One of the most striking impressions conveyed by the appearance of the department was of the multi-media approach and the



amazing range of materials and objects in the process of being used. For example, there were sprouting potatoes painted in silver, a cat in wire netting, shoes made of brushes, heads with machine parts, a piano with cotton wool keys, a piano with cylindrical keys, a pelvis translated into machine structures, a large plaster and plastic eye with wire eyelashes, a wire frame washstand covered with orange foam, pebbles in sacking pockets, wooden eggs, huge fabric portraits, varnished buns, plans for a knitted octopus, a face with a camera eye, a series of modelled heads in white, black, spotted and cross-hatched, delicately painted corrugated card buildings, exciting tapestry, animal paintings, prints, a head with lips where the eyes are usually found.

On looking over the students' working areas it was apparent that the department must offer a wide range of opportunities for learning technical and craft skills. In fact there were eleven service areas, each representing a specialist activity with the appropriate staff and facilities, and all available to all the students at any point on the course.

The eleven service areas were: ceramics, performance, film, etching, fine prints, plastics, textiles, woodwork, metalwork, sound and photography. It was interesting that they were called service areas, suggesting that technics should serve the creative impulses. The students may use or move into a service area either as a result of personal initiative or tutorial guidance.

Underlying the tutorial approach of most of the staff is the belief that learning technique for its own sake inhibits ideas. However, the subtle relationship between ideas and technique has to be understood: "As student ideas begin to emerge from the experimental groping characteristic of first



year work, technique is seen as a necessary servant in the process of transforming idea into art." 5

Looking round the department certainly provoked thoughts beyond technical considerations. There was the haunting, rather disconcerting feeling that amid the weird, whimsical and idiosyncratic expressions something was coming across about the nature of late 20th century human situations. There was something disruptive, partly exciting and partly frightening. Perhaps the latter was the more obvious influence.

The students working at the time of the visit seemed rather gentle and thoughtful people. They were apparently expressing something beyond their own personal feelings.

Without making realistic visual statements of violence, terrorism, vandalism, oppression and alienation; nevertheless, there were overtones of these things. There was a sensitivity to excruciating and traumatic experiences taking form in savage humour, pathological images and 'aggressive' materials.

An exhibition of the 2nd Year work was taking place at the time and the same feeling was conveyed by some of the art in the show. There were pieces of a doll's body, violent forms in red, black and purple, shadow people, nightmares and a collage of faces and faces within a face. There were hints of Francis Bacon, Burra, Magritte and Tapiés and the seventh side of the dice mentality.

The Leeds department places a special stress on Performance Art. There was a dynamic explosion of student leisure-culture in the sixties and there is now a performance area. The students are encouraged to see performance as an extension of painting and sculpture.

The underlying aims of the department may be summed up by



a reference to the type of goals the staff have in mind for the third year students: "Above all, they should have a confident awareness of the nature of the difficult and mysterious creative process as it works in them individually. This confidence will be largely due to the fact that from the beginning of the course they have been asked many questions but seldom given ready-made answers; have been presented with many possible routes but never made to follow any particular one." 6

An open-ended situation is always vulnerable to abuse and sometimes is abused. The ideology stands or falls on the basis of self-discipline and self-enquiry on the part of the students. Success depends on appropriate selection and on staff with a profound belief in this approach to art education. It also depends on freedom from restrictions in terms of methods of working at all levels.

In conclusion it may be of interest to quote from the remarks of two of the external assessors from 1970:

Patrick Heron

"Needless to say, I was greatly stimulated by my four days at the School and by the enormous excitement and variety of so much of what we were shown.

".... There is absolutely NO compliance at Leeds this year with such tailor-made requirements as are dictated at present by "success" in London and New York. Leeds has gone its own way yet again." 7

Adrian Henri

".... The overall standard of work in this college is as high as any (to my knowledge) in the country at the moment, including the London Post-graduate colleges. Secondly, and more importantly, there is a genuine variety of expression and use of media, a feeling of encountering a number of separate and distinct personalities. That argues for a great curiosity and openness of ideas on the part of the staff." 8



Students' Art at Leeds showing Working Areas





The three photographs shown opposite relate to this 1979 visit to the Department. The first one shows the working area and current themes of a 2nd Year Chinese girl. The painting in the middle of the top row is her self-portrait. The second photograph is of an oil painting by a 3rd Year German girl. It is very large and has subtle tactile qualities difficult to reveal in a reproduction. The third picture is of a model of a giant spider by Susan, a 3rd Year student. The spider is made of rolls of bandages, plaster, resin and paint. It has a pair of female human legs as well as its spider-like ones. Susan said that it may be regarded as a metamorphic image which was inspired by a dream. In the background is a golden web, ambiguously delicate for such a creature to have made.

At the time of this visit other work to be seen included Severini-like abstractions and jester figures; paintings of large heads in black, white and grey; freely painted landscapes in orange and black; realistic studies of shells, fruit and flowers; collages and three life-size models of women at the hairdressers, one with hair made of rope. A student was arranging twisted strips of metal across the floor. He said that he was undecided what the final result would be. The forms were rather like question marks and he said that he was uncertain where art was going.

However, the main reason for this visit was really to take the opportunity of observing some of the interviews for entry to the Department in the coming year.



Leeds Department of Fine Art

2/5/79

Observation of Interviews for entry to Degree Course in Fine Art

On arrival a candidate was in the process of being interviewed by two tutors, assisted by a student representative. His large portfolio seemed to consist almost entirely of his foundation course work, including many life and still-life studies. The panel would have liked to see more evidence of his own free time efforts. The candidate described the Foundation Course from a Lancashire art college as following too much of a routine. There was over emphasis on teaching students how to draw what they see. However, in offering some defence of the college, one of the panel expressed the view that perhaps correct observation is an important beginning, leading on to the exploration of ways of expressing feelings later. The candidate said that he was interested in music and in relationships between space and sound. When asked if he had any questions to ask the panel he enquired about the tutor/student position. He was told that tutors do not run after the students, it is for the students to make the approach as and when they wish to discuss their ideas.

After he had gone the panel seemed somewhat doubtful about whether he was entirely suitable for the course, although certain good points about his work were mentioned. It was difficult to pinpoint what might be wrong, but perhaps he was too low key and not adventurous enough. If he was so interested in music in relation to the visual arts perhaps he should have brought along some evidence of his likely lines of development in this area.

Peter, the next candidate, said that his foundation course college had been too obsessed with technique, drawing and checking. When asked what he wanted from Leeds he said that he wanted to be given a push, and then the opportunity to look for himself.



One of the tutors said that Leeds may not give a push, but there may be stimulation from what was going on around. The student representative said that student initiative was important, it was best to begin with the attitude of wanting to put something in. A discussion followed about the nature of fine art and of the need to feel challenged. The question of communication arose. Peter said that he was confused about the function of the artist. A tutor said that he did not paint in order to communicate. Then there was the question of how important the actual art object was. Peter asked about work expected from the course. A tutor said that although the object was not to be all and end all, yet something in the way of tangible results was expected. However, this could take the form of performance rather than permanent structures.

Peter had brought along a great deal of work, some of it the foundation course material, but also examples of more personal and experimental ideas. Another tutor had by now joined the panel and there was obvious interest in Peter's views. He was asked what he thought of present day artists, and if he could name any that he could feel special sympathy towards. There were also questions about his choice of reading material and his hobbies. As regards his own art, he said that the painting he liked the best was one that held an element of mystery. Once again the question: Why Leeds? was asked. Peter said that he had heard of the liberal outlook in the fine art department. He was warned not to expect too much. "It's not the raving place it was five years ago" said one of the panel.

When he had gone there was a general feeling of agreement that he would most likely be suitable for the course. Perhaps it was not so much the answers he had given as the questions he



had raised that awakened the interest of the panel.

A third candidate observed. was Susan. She had been on a foundation course and also completed the first year of her degree course. When asked why she wanted to move to Leeds her answer was related to the need for a 'mixed media' atmosphere rather than purely painting experience. Susan had brought along a great deal of work. In her portfolio there were many interesting themes. Colour was obviously an important aspect of her expression, her style of painting was lively and exciting. Some of her art was of a large scale nature and this was displayed around the room. Discussion with the panel centred around her visual material and was very informal and sometimes light-hearted. Susan said that the work of Van Gogh and Munch had made an impact. One of her series of paintings related to the 'Scream' idea. She was also involved with photography and had pictures of a 'Rebirthing' experience which had become a type of performance art. Susan had made use of a wide range of materials from wood and plastic to fabrics and bamboo. She saw her art partly in terms of a therapeutic process. One series of paintings of a very expressive quality had been produced by the experience of watching burning books. There was a favourable reaction towards this candidate from the panel.

On looking back over these three interviews, there was a strong feeling of a specific line of approach. The panel were deliberately informal and friendly. It was stated several times that they did not want to bite, only to find out what makes a person tick. They seemed to be looking for a high degree of independence; for people on the edge of discovery; for flow of ideas, both visual and intellectual and for that mysterious of all qualities, potential. They wanted students who would establish



their own mode of creative expression; using the staff at both extremes of the affinity/opposition poles. They wanted some kind of indication of the likelihood of a visual commitment. A certain element of personal bewilderment may be interesting, but an attitude less negative than pencil-sucking despair was required. The panel said that the interviews were planned to take half an hour. However, it was apparent that they were not anxious to impose a rigid time control over the situation. They obviously wanted the candidates to feel free to take the interview in their own hands to some extent. They succeeded in creating the kind of atmosphere that was relaxed and stimulating at the same time.

As a point of comparison, it should be noted that in the departments of Industrial Design and Wood, Metal and Ceramics, for example, the interviewing panels are likely to have slightly different requirements from their candidates. In Manchester a tutor said that although these departments looked for the signs of high creative potential, certain features relating to character were considered equally important, particularly indications of the ability to work hard and persevere. The acquisition of practical skills of an advanced nature only becomes possible through continuous effort over a period of time. Students selecting these areas are more likely to be orientated towards specific career structures and economic security than the fine art students.



Crewe + Alsager College of Higher Education

The Faculty of Creative Arts

13/2/79

In 1976 plans were made for a new type of course to be developed in the area of creative arts at Alsager College. It is known as the B.A. (Combined Studies) Honours degree course in Creative Arts. Normally a student would possess two A Levels or Foundation experience, a proven interest in one of five arts and a developed interest in another. A whole day may be devoted to considering the suitability of a student for the course. A student is expected to plan a course pattern from the units offered. The six units per year include - in the first and second years - one core unit, four units selected from two arts and an additional free choice. What makes this course special is the way the students are expected to integrate their chosen arts, studying the relationships between them, rather than following their two main interests along separate lines. The five arts from which they may make their selection are dance, music, drama, visual arts and creative writing. The course offers a balance between the theoretical and the practical, with an emphasis on the latter. The tutors spoke with enthusiasm for the course, especially the way the greater freedom of the third year would provide the students with opportunities for developing novel ways of combining the arts, and the way this knowledge could be expressed in their dissertations.

A range of buildings on the site offer varying opportunities for creative work. Perhaps some of the more interesting ones being those not originally planned for educational purposes! A saloon bar was in the process of being transformed into an imaginative exhibition area and large rooms, with a certain amount of expense, were becoming dance and theatre workshops, with scope for



both traditional and experimental performance. A particularly good arrangement was provided for the fine arts students: This was "Heathfields", a large old house outside the campus, almost a retreat, where students could become completely absorbed in their work in a relaxed and informal atmosphere, with the fine trees in the grounds providing a source of inspiration.

In looking over a number of buildings one carried away an over all impression of the activities which may be described as follows: One student concerned with the visual arts and music, was in the process of developing huge abstract paintings expressing the feeling of specific musical compositions; another was exploring the fragmentation idea with many examples of shattered images in paint and collage; there were serial displays of colour themes in relation to sound and intriguing musical sculptures. A student involved with the visual arts and drama was working on the designing of costumes for 'Oklahoma'; another was working on the association between the visual and poetical and was designing experimental woven hangings to interpret the poems of Ted Hughes. A novel was being written that would have value in the dramatic field and some paintings of underwater scenes were to be used as stage settings. There were visual biographies of the life and work of Pop musicians. One student was making a limited edition style of quality book, with poems personally selected and paired with appropriate pictures. She was thinking about such matters as paper, type-faces, lay-out, headings, borders and binding and studying existing examples.

There was encouragement to think, not only about the arts in relation to each other, but also to consider art and society, art and politics and art and psychology and perception. One student was concerned with the idea of ambiguity and was



experimenting with various visual tricks and illusions. At the entrance to his studio area he had written: "Do not adjust your mind there is a fault in reality!"

Students with an interest in ideas involving ceramics, jewellery, metal or plastics find that, in conjunction with the technological departments of the college, they may develop skills in these areas. The stress is placed on innovation and it has been found that this is easier in the visual arts than in drama, dance or music where there are often traditions of developing the interpretative aspects. It is necessary to give encouragement to improvisation and originality by breaking down barriers between these arts.

All the lecturers associated with this course seemed to be very enthusiastic. Perhaps this was partly because they were aware of being caught up in a new venture and they were eager to see what the students made of the possibilities suggested. With the Indians of the Pacific Northwest it was apparent that one of the reasons for such interesting work was cultural need. The various festivals and religious ceremonies made demands on the people to relate painting, costume design, drama, music and dance in a natural way. Our own society has become more complex, there is a certain dicotomy between the artist and society. The art educator has to rethink the fine art programme with social problems in mind.



Birmingham Polytechnic

School of Fine Art

Exhibition 29/6/78



There were outdoor cafe scenes, not unlike the interest the Impressionists showed in this type of subject matter, but with more attention to detail! ( sometimes art seems to be going in circles). There were examples of social realism such as: man on motor bike, man painting a wall, man with cat, men playing cards and musicians. There were nudes and still life studies showing varying degrees of influence from Post-Impressionism, Matisse and Braque. There were landscapes, seascape, horses, birds, fishes, snakes, palm designs, studies of elm, lime and sycamore. A lively example of the non-figurative painting in red and green-blue is shown above. It is necessary to imagine this picture on a large scale to appreciate the effect.

Sculpture in wood, metal and mixed media was on show, then suddenly a surprise:



Birmingham Polytechnic, School of Fine Art

Visit to Exhibition, 29/6/78

The Work of Joanna Digger

Enter a room off a larger sculptural display area, not through a door, but through a gauze curtain; enter another world, quiet, remote, magical and serene. Step onto pebbles and white sand and feel the texture of these materials alternately through the feet. Most of the room was curtained off with fine gauze. Looking through there was an area of pebbles and stone chippings, planned in a geometrical pattern of eight radiating spokes, carefully edged with wood to separate it from the lighter sand background. The effect was really to create a mandala. At regular intervals following a circle, there rose up from the ground slender wooden rods arranged in radiating formations. Immediately below the ceiling the mathematical criss-crossing of cord formed intricate designs. Cord was also used to cross from ceiling to floor, making patterns in space. The lighting was subdued.

No title was given to this work. In a sense a title was not required. The message seemed to be: make what you can of it from your own experience. Ideas that came to mind were of the spirit of primitive religion; undertones of wild, Celtic feeling; Zen Buddhist gardens; a meditation centre or a Sufi spiritual retreat or Khalwat: "The retreat to an isolated cell in order to 'remember' God is considered by many orders to be the most important of all Sufi disciplines. It is an aid in achieving a state of permanent inward retreat."

Extreme mathematical precision and symmetry combined with implicit poetry. In terms of content this very modern sculpture was like a symbolic representation of the atom or the cosmos. In



terms of the feeling conveyed it was like an ancient, sacred place.

Turning away from the curtained area, there was a model of a similar theme on a smaller scale. On a table were three books, showing sources of inspiration, probably collected over three years. There were many exciting photographs and some poetry.

The photographs reveal an interest in prehistoric stones, wild nature, great tree roots, abbey ruins, roof patterns, idiosyncratic buildings such as an orangery with a glass domed form.

The poetry indicated a way of thinking along parallel lines with Joanna's sculpture. A poem about a visit to the Cistercian Abbey of Rievaulx in Yorkshire in March 1978 refers to silence and echoes, sacred ground and haunting feelings: "Souls, wander, back, again" and concludes with the following verse:

"Mighty stones,  
Almighty hand,  
Strength, stands, against, control,  
Body, minds, souls, enclosed, still, in, broken, stones."

But returning to the sculpture, it may represent a temple, perhaps of a very personal nature. One could ask of course, but not just now. Better for the moment to accept it as the gateway to many ideas. Here, certainly was the expression of a very high level of creativity. Using basically simple materials - wood, stones, sand, cord and gauze - so much was being said about past and future and about geometry and intuition.

To quote again from Sufism: "The spiritual retreat can remain effective, after one leaves the khalwat, only if one continues to remember." 9



## The Work of Joanna Digger Explained

In August a letter from Joanna provided the interesting information that she was spending the summer with a small travelling circus-theatre show, then touring the Norfolk Broads. With her friends they formed a group of four people, performing on the beaches, in public houses and on village greens. She said that it was all extremely stimulating and opened her eyes to many other aspects of art. Joanna said that her work at college was always bordering on performance, offering audience participation and an invitation of total involvement. It was significant that her Birmingham sculpture had indeed provided a personal experience of involvement of a profound nature.

She offered further information and comments on her return home to Stourbridge in the autumn. In the meantime she had been given photocopies of the two previous pages.

23/10/78

Joanna wrote: "...It was really interesting to see someone else's eye view of what I had done and interpreted in many ways how I meant it to be.

I am not going to write a report of what I did in the same way, but I am going to start with some chronological ideas of how I built up towards the sculpture.

I have always been interested since childhood in myths and legends and fairy stories, deepening in puberty to an interest in science fiction and then later to folklore and thus inevitably to religions surrounding folklore and a very basic need in people towards this area. The area that I speak of is a very wide one as far as I am concerned; covering, for example, yoga, telepathy, witchcraft and religious architecture of every type.



It relates to every area of the unknown that is speculated upon endlessly and called by my sister-in-law (an archaeologist) 'the lunatic fringe'. She is probably right, but it is always the fascination of the unknown that holds me and I am sure many other people also. It is the sort of thing that leads explorers into central Africa and sends mediums into trances exploring the centres of their minds.

I started off in the Second Year - having overcome my tendencies to try and make Art with a capital A - by making a tree man and hut, both of which were half tree, half hut or man. This was started off through my love of trees and woods, which I find to be very silent, intense places. An individual tree is a joy, with the strong central column dominating everything, as a central column dominates all my work. A tree is a focal point, I tried to make my feelings clear about this when I camped in the Forest of Dean for a week, and built a type of shrine around a tree and a part of the tree. In reality the tree did n't need my poor additions as it was a shrine in its own right.

My work continued along the lines of using natural materials. I began to realise that to express my own feelings I needed to take the circumstances in which these feelings were strongest, and create an atmosphere in which I might be able to communicate these feelings to other people. That possibly I might give them also the opportunity for whatever they have felt within that type of area to come to ahead.

In other words if they are standing within a 'work of art' they know is supposed to be trying to communicate something, they might be more receptive than perhaps just walking through a wood or into a church. Hence I set out to make a focal point for all the atmospheres that I have felt.



Most of my work leading up to the sculpture for a year before was based on architecture, on a growing need for some type of structure upon which to hang my feelings. So again, taking the central focal point theme, I built out from there. I looked at Avebury, Chartres, Yorkshire's Abbey ruins and at Buddhist temples; then at smaller more intimate places, such as an orangery, a folly, a tiny medieval church and clumps of trees upon hills, the list is endless. I was trying to find the key to the appeal that all these places had for me.

So it is a private search, the stages of which I reveal in an outward form for anyone to interpret in their own way. The trouble is that if I eventually discover what the unknown is and what it holds for me, then it will not be unknown any longer and will lose its fascination. But of course I will never find out because there is always something else around the next corner, the cycle is endless.

Talking of cycles, the Solar Circus with which I was working this summer, was based upon the idea of eternal cycles and of things having no end. It was worked around the birth and death of the solar system woven in with the phoenix legend. To be honest we created our own myths, I was the star traveller, a type of narrator-ringmaster perceiving the cycles and able to foresee the future. Although we started the show with the birth of the sun, we could equally well have started with its death!

But lets go back to my environment. The original idea was to make it for you to walk within it like a church and be the focal point yourself of all the lines of force that crossed through the room. The pathways on the floor were intended for the person moving within to be forced into certain positions



and become part of the sculpture and be able to change the sculpture with his or her presence.

However, I discovered after I had made it, that when you entered it its magical quality was diminished and the peace and unattainableness were lost. It somehow lost its purity with an intrusion from mankind. So I blocked off the doorway to the inner room with gauze, thus preventing any idea of entering it, even though the desire to go in was still there. It was quite obviously made for human beings in terms of scale and pathways. Like architecture it was totally related to people in a functional way.

The environment set me thinking of the beauty of an inaccessible thing and reminded me of pot-holing experiences. There would be little cameos in crystals and pools with untouchable stalactites dripping into them. There was the knowledge that if you did touch them they would be irreparably damaged by the dirt from your hands. Sometimes you could look through small holes in the rock and see a fairytale land laid out before you in the spotlight of your helmet lamp.

I suppose my love of caves has been another subconscious influence upon my work. I like to make things enclosed, such as cages and huts, forms that I can put my back to, hence the influence of buildings, though only old ones, those that have had a chance to acquire an atmosphere. The ageing process seems to aid the feeling of a place. The only way that I can think of using my work is within a garden. If I ever get a permanent address my first act will be to make the garden into a sculpture."



Comments arising from Joanna Digger's Account

Joanna's way of working has been described in some detail as it is highly relevant to the main themes of this thesis. On the one hand her sculpture is essentially creative and her method of approach clearly demonstrates how one particular creative individual may arrive at her own unique form of artistic expression. It is also important from the point of view of art education to consider her lines of development and what this implies in terms of her basic requirements.

It is as if the student were saying to the teacher: This is how my creativity evolves, make use of the information in the way you arrange situations for your own students. This is really a case of thinking backwards from the product and looking to its sources of inspiration.

In Joanna's case she developed as an artist with assistance from the fairy-tale, the myth and the legend; with stimulation from the occult, prehistoric sites, wild nature and many types of architectural contact through personal journeys. Both people and also opportunity for solitude appear to be important. Caving, camping, drama and ritual come into the story; but it is not so much the activities themselves that are significant, as the very personal way in which they are used.

Because all this has such a special meaning for the art educator reference will be made to this aspect in the following chapter.



The Royal College of ArtSchool of Painting15/6/78

In visiting the various colleges and hospitals it is essential to play the approach by ear. In order to receive the most meaningful ideas and information an attempt has to be made to tune in to the atmosphere.

In the case of the School of Painting of the Royal College the feeling conveyed was as follows: Here it will not be necessary to ask too many questions, better to move around, making casual comments and looking at work in progress, waiting for the student to speak.

First it should be said that all the work of the Royal College is post-graduate. The School of Painting seemed almost like a home for the students. They could, if they so wished, use the building from 8a.m. to 10p.m., seeing their tutor about once a week. They had either their own 'studio' area, or in some cases, three or four students may share a larger room.

One student spoke of a haunting affection for his own native, rural Ireland as he prepared the background for a hazy blue-green landscape. Another student talked of experiments with cones and mirrors, he wanted to suggest that when you are coming you are also going! He also appeared to be preoccupied with the inevitability of the third world war. Another student discussed the nature of the creative process and the importance of the element of unexpectedness. He stressed the power of the unconscious and referred to the way colour seemed to take over and have a life of its own in his pictures.

The student who showed me round was particularly interested in drawing objects from unusual angles. She also liked to explore



relationships between art and physics, being currently involved with ideas regarding the translation of the Doppler effect into visual imagery.

One of the most stimulating students was a graduate from Salford University. He had studied aeronautical and mechanical engineering. Having left school at fifteen, he had taken the route to university via apprenticeship schemes and evening classes. However, he eventually decided that working with computers imposed certain limitations and he turned to art. Here again Graham's route was through evening classes and he also undertook personal study. His particular interest seemed to be in the painting of exterior walls. At the time of the visit he was writing about projects and problems of compromise. On the subject of creativity he said: "Perhaps people collect thoughts rather than have them."

Later, in the bar, one of the students appeared carrying a heavy book. He had been to the library, but not the college library. He said that he thought it important to belong to more than one library. He saw the danger of being limited in one's range of thoughts and themes by the awareness of a particular librarian or group of people. The book that he had borrowed was concerned with the secret teachings throughout the ages and was called: "Masonic, Hermetic, Cabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy". It contained many complex and intriguing diagrams. He saw the possible links between ancient esoteric wisdom and modern approaches to painting. Several other students wrote down the title of the book. 10

It is understandable that many artists like part-time teaching with this kind of student. The cross-fertilization of ideas is likely to be beneficial in creative terms for the tutor as well



as the student.

During the course of informal discussion with a group of students several topics emerged: On the subject of work, some thought that perhaps an opportunity for projects would be helpful towards more social interaction. They sometimes felt isolated following their own individual lines all the time. On the subject of 'Style' they said that the college did not impose one, but they admitted that it could seem like it; for example, the present tendency towards social realism, could appear imposed.

On the subject of suitable student intake, it was apparent that the college wanted to encourage more foreign people. With only a total of 75 students covering three year courses people from other cultures could easily have a marked influence. Cross-cultural stimulation is seen as an important type of experience.

On looking round the School of Painting, the impressions of the type of work completed or in progress may be described as follows: There were some very exciting paintings of knights with skeleton faces riding horses in wildly rearing positions. The other students said that the artist had been in the crusades in a previous incarnation! There was a series of paintings of almost cubist style pianos and other musical instruments, blending into the backgrounds, in vivid reds, greens and purples and one almost abstract picture called "The Death of Parity". Some weird nightmare pictures were too realistically painted to be comfortable. Horrific, Goya-like pictures of men eating parts of human bodies, had beautifully painted backgrounds making them seem even more terrible. There was a fair amount of almost down to earth social realism, with varying degrees of Pop art influence. It was especially interesting to see an element of diversity coming from a few foreign students: vivid red and orange scenes



by an African and hints of the Middle East in some of the pictures. There were some delightful paintings in one area of a large room by a Japanese girl: Some followed Hokusai themes and a splendid waterfall was perhaps a little too reminiscent of "Bridge on the River Ina", a colour print of the mid-1830's by Eisen. It was not a copy, in a sense it was very imaginative and unusual. It just set one thinking about the extreme rarity of pure originality. Then again perhaps this girl had seen this kind of waterfall rather than the print in question. Perhaps influence did not come into it. Basic, subtle cultural types of influence are of course to be found everywhere. With more foreign students the college is likely to have some interesting avenues to explore.

#### The Royal College of Art Degree Show 1978

In a modern college building at Kensington Gore the work of other schools was displayed.

Ceramics and Glass

Silversmithing and Jewellery

Textile Design

Furniture Design

Industrial Design

Graphic Design

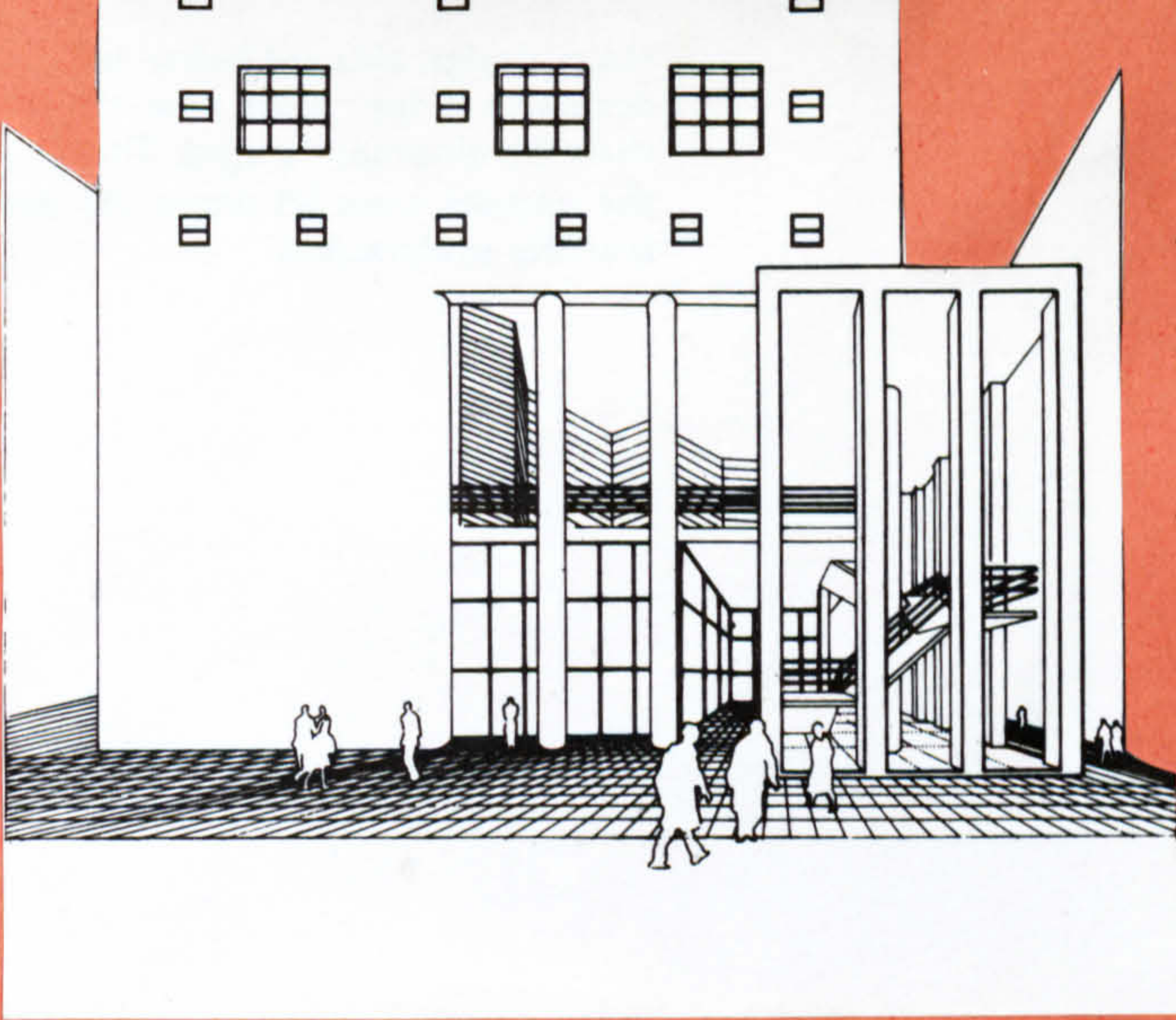
Environmental Design

Queen's Gate

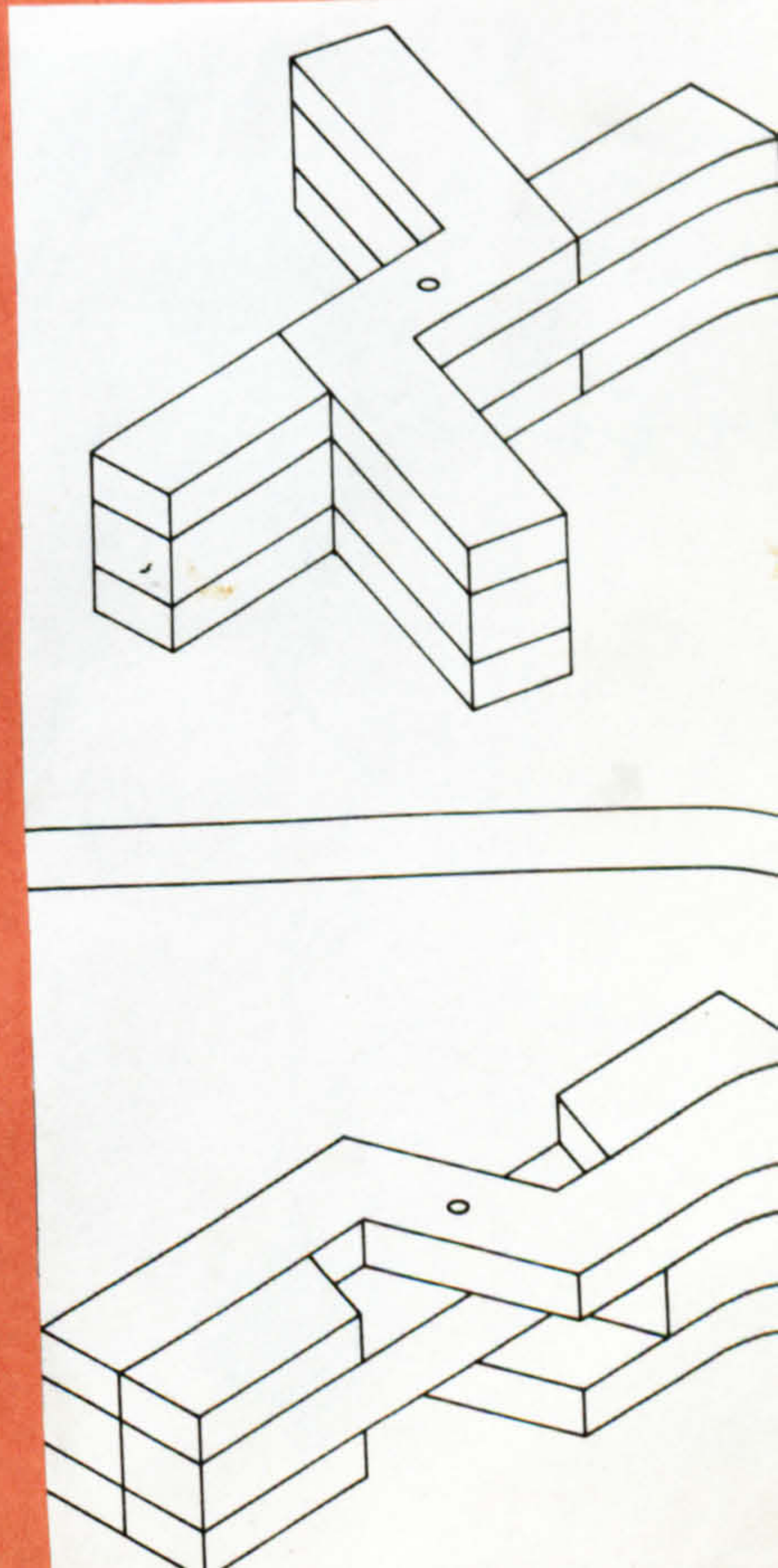
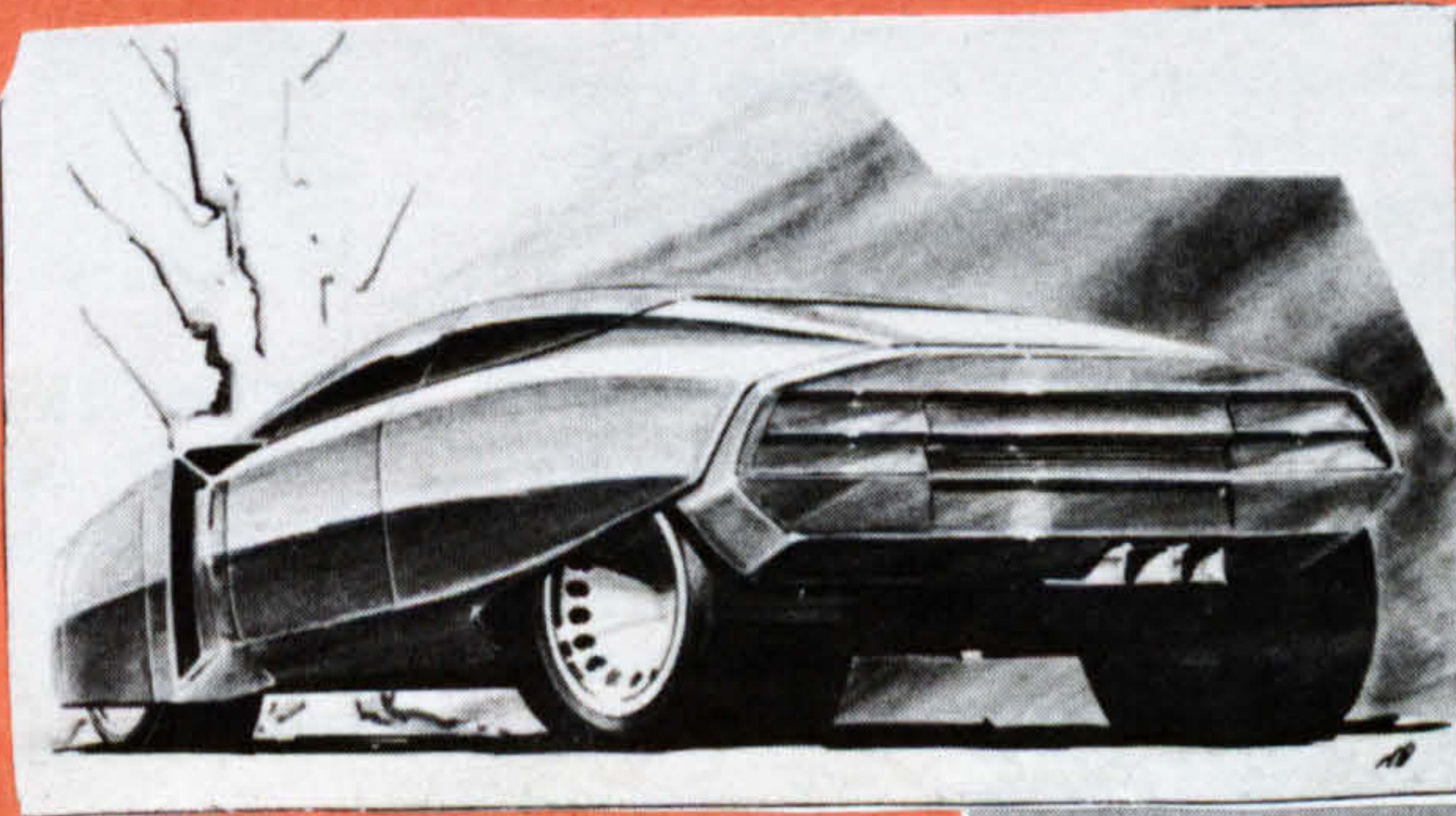
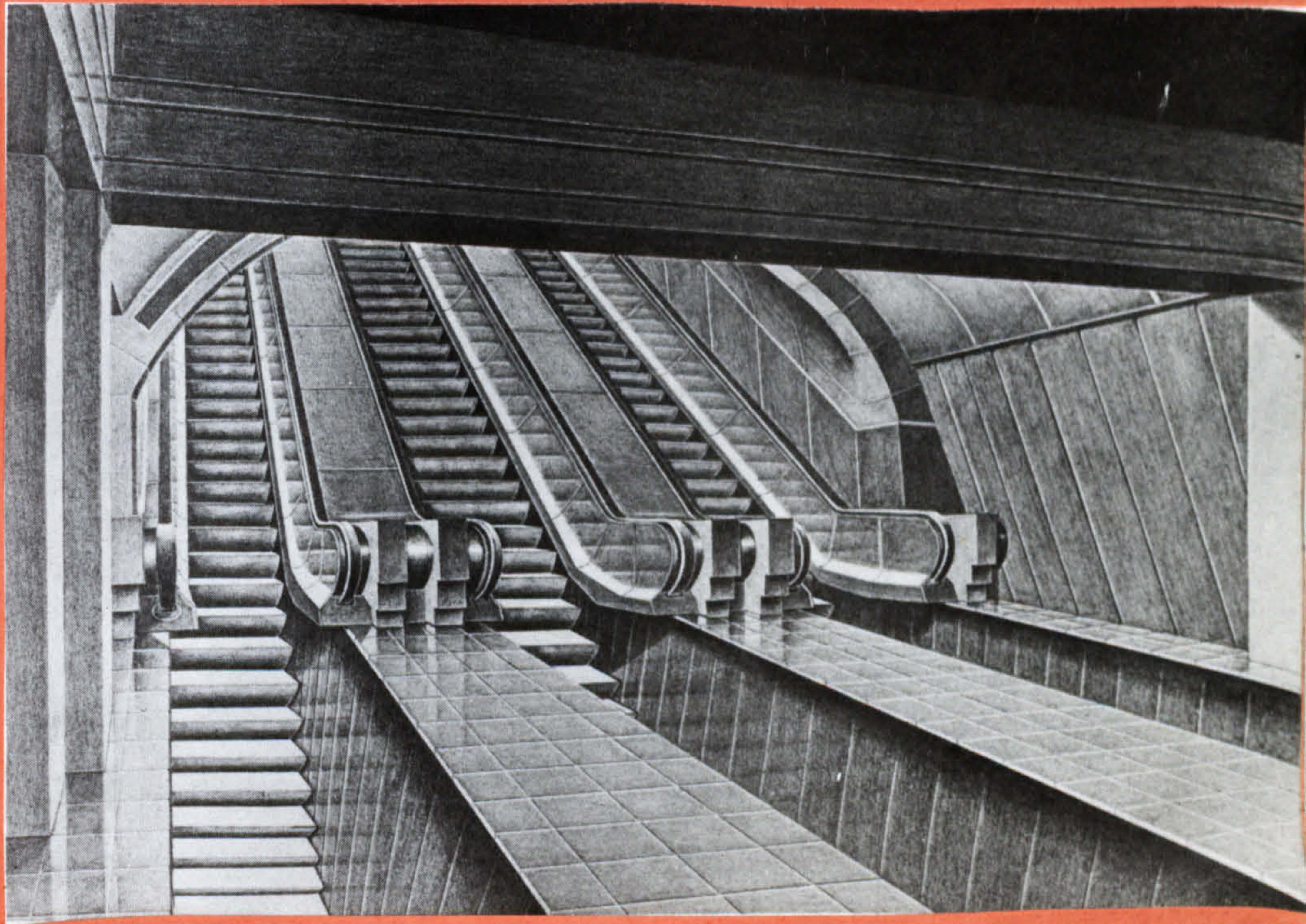
Sculpture

\* The Painting School had held their exhibition in May.





1. Environmental Design
2. Graphic Arts - Illustration
3. Industrial Design
4. Furniture Design





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# Textile Design



SARAH BUNGEY  
109 Grove Park  
London SE5  
01-733-1470

TRANSPARENCIES  
weaves-knits-prints



HILARY SCARLETT  
70, Osidge Lane, London, N14  
01-361 2435



The exhibits and displays suggested qualities in the students such as: imagination, ingenuity, inventive ability and intense and concentrated specific skills:

For example, there were exquisite pieces of glass, designs of tableware suitable for handicapped people, pendants in silver and glass and acrylic bracelets. Amid the extensive textile displays were woven fabrics inspired by sand patterns in the desert, heat-treated plastic, fabrics for children, knitted structures, batik, tapestry using linen wrapped sisal, ideas from Poland, textiles linked with current fashion trends, inspiration from the plant world and varied surfaces for wall-coverings. Some of the students should speak for themselves:

Sarah Bungey: "My work is all to do with surfaces. I am interested in treating materials to create new and unusual effects. Some are purely decorative and very exclusive, others have more practical and commercial possibilities."

Beryl Gibson: "Let's start at the beginning and design something quite special and personal, using all the tactile qualities yarns, chemicals and finishings have to offer."

Claudine Mitaty: "My research in tapestry consists of expressing images and atmospheres provoked from nature, especially the mystery and beauty of insects."

Hilary Scarlett: "I'm involved with producing a range of semi-transparent fabrics. I want to build up a collection of layers - uniting woven, knitted and printed surfaces that can be used on their own or co-ordinated with each other." Hilary goes on to speak of infinite possibilities and accidental fresh images by means of addition and subtraction.!!

In other display areas there were examples of furniture linking comfort with industrial production methods; a vertical



hanging garden, an automatic photographic machine, a walnut counting device, a superb electric lawnmower and cars aiming to combine sculptural excitement with practicality. There were many kinds of consumer products, all with a strong visual identity. And so one could go on, graphic design, graphic information, illustration, photography, environmental projects, media themes, film shows and design research co-ordinating psychology and design in our rather overwhelming technological world.

The sculpture displayed in a large hut along Queen's Gate seemed to place an emphasis on austerity: almost no colour, very little in terms of rich texture and not much to remember of elevated forms and relationships. There was no overwhelming technology here, just a strange feeling of world rejection conveyed by wood, paper, cold metal, foil and transparent sheeting, everything white and grey in white rooms.

#### Balloon goes up in the name of art

Perhaps this brief account of the Royal College should be concluded by a reference to something that happened in March. It was a two-day event by the students entitled 'Inside Out'. One of the organisers was Graham Cooper mentioned earlier. The idea was to send up 500 balloons as an invitation to the general public to become involved with art. There were many bizarre and imaginative exhibits and performances including a Mad Hatter's Tea Party, an opportunity for clay-throwing and a continuous series of slide-shows, lectures and demonstrations. Behind the 'Happening' was the idea, felt by many students, that art should be made to work in an everyday environment and not be too remote and elitist. The experiment was a bold attempt at barrier breaking, both within the College and outside.



The Royal College of Art

School of Painting Degree Show

8/5/79



Nicolette Ismay

Untitled, oil paint, 96"x 80½"

It was interesting to visit the Degree Show of the School of painting, having seen the work of some of the same students in their studios in June, 1978. There were nine pictures by Nicolette Ismay; using acrylics, pastels, oil paint and collage techniques they exploited colour relationships and shattering feelings of movement, they contributed to the generally bold and lively effect in the entrance hall of the exhibition. The work on display was diverse and by no means over concerned with social realism, as the visit to the studios in 1978 might have suggested.

The way in which students from different parts of the world are encouraged at the RCA could be well observed in the show. An artist from the Sudan had produced large, partially abstract



paintings, using vibrating colours as expected from a person with an African background. Picasso had found inspiration for Cubism in African Art. Here was a student drawing his inspiration from two cultures - in the reverse order. Takae Horton was referred to as the painter of the waterfall in 1978. She had succeeded in linking mathematics and art in a series of 'Origami Constructions'. Her most exciting and original painting had taken many months to produce. The complex, intersecting planes gave a subtle feeling of depth, the sombre browns, blues and oranges and the blurred images gave a magical quality to the work. Takae said that it really represented memories of a festival. Every year, in the rural parts of Japan, there were festivals of thanksgiving to the Gods. She said: "I would like to thank the great characters who let me study in my own way. And I am happy thanks to the protection of my mountain Gods." A student from Mauritius had worked on a project for his degree and was concerned with 'Rhythm'. He said: "Individuality is living up to our personal rhythm, not the one equated with the strict temporal sequences of our organised societies. Freedom is respecting this principle and upholding intensity, and not duration, as the criterion of the validity of experience." Among the students exhibiting there was a PhD candidate concerned with the relationship between abstract art and Islamic ideas.



The Chelsea School of Art, Manresa Rd., Chelsea, London

The Painting and Sculpture Departments

20/11/78

In the Painting Department there are usually around twenty-eight students taken each year for the three year course leading to the first degree. There are six workshops, each with an emphasis on a particular aspect of painting - abstraction, construction, life studies, figurative art, etc. Students are encouraged to enter a workshop, partly on the basis of their own work shown at interview, and also with reference to their special interests. They are advised to sample two or three workshops over a period of time. There is likely to be a mingling of all three year stages in all the workshops at any given time.

The central philosophy of the Department is translated in terms of freedom for exploration. The students are not given set problems or projects. They are thrown in at the deep end, as one of the lecturers expressed it. There seemed to be a certain amount of over-crowding in some areas. However, Jeremy<sup>e</sup>, a first year student, had managed to acquire the temporary use of a very large room at the top of the building, which he shared with his friend. Space had obviously stimulated him and he was experimenting with large scale collages in black, white and grey; his friend was working on collages using waste materials. They were wondering about designing a swing. One student said that she thought the most helpful aspect of being a student was the time it offered for forming friendships with people sufficiently intuitive to act as catalysts for one's creative work. Two mature students thought that some of the younger ones did not understand what freedom was all about, and they therefore wasted time. Perhaps they did, but art students are often criticized in this way. Sometimes gazing



into space, talking for long periods over coffee and apparently playing around are part of a process that needs to be viewed over a long period for evidence of another side of the story. Dylan Thomas, for example, obscured his diligence as his public appearances were needed for relaxation.

Jakes, a third year student, said that he enjoyed his time at the college. In the early days he said that there were some problems in finding inspiration amid an urban setting after being used to rural landscape. He thought that the best way to encourage creativity was to select people with high creative potential and offer them a sympathetic environment in which to unfold. His own art was tending towards surrealism, but not of a blatant kind. Some of his paintings were architectural - the views of London from the many second and third floor windows would encourage this - but there was an element of ambiguity in them. His picture of a solitary, shadowy figure in a large room suggested a surreal feeling of apprehension, as if in painting the present he had also hinted at the future. Jakes said that he thought it was rather difficult to separate the dream world from the real world as he saw them as interlocked. As far as the art history aspect of the course was concerned, he was sorry that only pseudo depth seemed to be wanted. He would have liked to take an original line, but his suggested topic had been rejected and he would probably turn to a safe and well-worn theme.

The images that come to mind of work in the process of completion in the department may be described kaleidoscopically as follows: blue hard edge composition; silver and black squares in relief; a captive, enclosed shape contrasted with a free, floating one; collages from maps and torn bank balance statements; grey rectangles, sophisticated and calm, echoing the architecture;



Students' Studio Areas at Chelsea

1 & 2 Painting Department

3 Sculpture Department - Christopher's Workshop



1.



2.



3.





large scale textural paintings; studies of fishes and water plants and portraits.

In the Sculpture Department there are usually around twelve students taken each year and six Master's Degree students from around 100 applications. There are basement rooms for welding, blacksmithing, cutting, turning and grinding; with the opportunity to work in wood, metal, glass, wire, fabric and synthetic materials such as fibre glass and polythene. Three technicians trained in industry are available to give help and advice as well as the specialist tutors.

At the time of the visit there were a few students working in an outdoor area on tower structures. Inside one student was experimenting with the placing of coloured film rectangles against a large wall. He moved them slowly into position behind a transparent cover. A girl asked the technician for some help with glass-cutting. "We get more girls than men in this department" he said. "Sculpture is hard work, and that's what the boys don't like you know!"

Christopher may be taken as an example of an M.A. student. He was working on a "Nut" theme. The expression 'nuts and bolts' is often used in connection with down to earth situations. But here these basic engineering shapes were being exploited in a very imaginative way. Christopher had made an enlarged nut in wire, then in sandpaper and then in torn sandpaper. He became interested in the possibilities of sandpaper from the aesthetic view and also in wire mesh, as shown by his working area in the illustration. Another subject that excited him was the wooden log. He had built up many structures, almost like children's toys, in a most ingenious way from this simple form. The studio and the workshop seem to merge in present day art colleges.



St Martin's College of Art, London

20/3/79

Painting and Sculpture

In a sculpture workshop mainly for foundation students, there were a group of people using a range of materials such as plaster, plastics, cardboard, metal and wire netting. A tutor said that they had over one hundred students taking the foundation course, this offered experimentation in all areas of artistic work. Two students, at the time of the visit, were following a project theme concerned with "Internal Relationships" and nearby someone was constructing what looked like a weird spaceship.

A first year painting student called John, said that there were thirty students on their course, but that only about a fifth of them would be likely to come in the college to work at any one time. He said that graphics and printing students attended more regularly. With fine art the college provided the alternative opportunities for guidance and criticism, or the freedom to be left alone to develop one's own ideas. On the subject of characteristic types of art, John said that he thought that the sixties had been a very creative decade. He could n't say that there was any sign of significant movements at the present time. He thought that Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art and Conceptual Art were all burnt out. This sounded rather sad: an "everything has been done before" kind of negative approach. Perhaps this is what happens when people are too concerned about following trends. However, John was a serious student. He said that he thought art was about tension and that the borderline between sanity and madness was a narrow one. He took the view that if an artist wishes to achieve anything he must become really obsessed and this means unbalanced; though this could be weighted in one direction, not psychologically disturbed.



A third year painting student was working in a large room on an abstract painting suggesting something of the feeling of Chinese calligraphy, using black paint on a light grey background. In the corridor outside there were a series of large scale abstractions revealing an interest in the tactile qualities of paint. There was a hint of the landscape as a point of departure and one of them seemed to be inspired by a waterfall. Opposite these pictures there was a striking composition in shades of purple. In another room a second year sculpture student was preparing for an exhibition for her assessment. She had created a series of three dimensional shapes in separate boxes, each one being made of different materials such as wood, stone, foam and straw and plaster. The girl with whom she shared the room was teaching at the time of the visit, her work seemed rather like a group of tombstones.

David, a third year sculpture student, said that the College had been running two parallel approaches to the subject: A & B type courses. The 'A' course was inclined towards freedom, experimentation and the multi-media line of development. The 'B' course followed rather traditional lines, teaching modelling and carving. David said that he was part of the 'A' course, and that his recent work consisted of collages of a social realist nature representing depressing themes. There were plans to merge the two kinds of approaches in the department. For his thesis David was working on the relationship between icons and modern advertising images. He said that he thought environment was very significant for the artist; the London based students tending to produce rather non-organic and angular structures. He said that a group of six students had recently been eliminated as they formed a work-shy Punk Rock sub group.



A Summary of Ways in which Creativity may be Encouraged and  
the Problems encountered arising from the Visits to Art Colleges

It may be helpful to look first at the type of student involved. The fine art student would seem to represent the embodiment of the creative search in its most extreme and undiluted form; so perhaps his or her feelings and ideas should be considered initially. These students stress the importance of adventure and challenge, of the power of the unconscious and the interlocking of the real world and the dream world. They speak of fairy tale, myth and legend, of wild nature and personal journeys. They often seem fascinated by ambiguity and mystery. Their type of sensitivity does not always find an easy expression in words. They may be seeking for something that cannot be defined except through the subjective and imaginative experience. What does the art college attempt to do for such individuals?

From the aspect of the physical background it may provide the appropriate setting in which to work. Whether this is the fine old house in its own grounds beyond the campus, or merely screens to demarcate a personal zone, there must be the sense of freedom. If the creative person is divergent and flexible the setting must mirror this, or the whole process may be blocked. The physical background must offer scope for peace and serenity and also for stimulation and the interchange of ideas. It must be both monastery and club, retreat and carnival. Buildings that are too 'well planned' in the clinical sense are not the best for these purposes. Often it is the odd corners and the rambling basements that lend themselves to becoming the studios. Certain stages of the creative process involve some degree of chaos and an incongruous mixture of objects.



Turning now to the role of the tutor in the art college: Here again there is a need for the freedom required by the student to be reinforced by the teacher. The best atmospheres and the most appropriate conditions for creative work appear to develop from the educational situations arranged by highly sensitive tutors. The ideal individual in this field is the one who shows respect for the strong personal outlook and convictions of the art student. He requires the kind of temperament that is more comfortable giving advice and guidance and not directions. The tutor anxious to encourage originality accepts the diversity of students' ideas, he welcomes the signs of adventurousness. He does not impose time limits for the development of ideas. He does not hold rigid views regarding methods of approach, some of his students may choose to make detailed preliminary drawings, others may paint in a direct and spontaneous way. He stimulates an interest in the lyrical, symbolic or evocative as opposed to the too obviously derivative. He encourages the evolution of a theme through a series of stages.

Students observed to be studying under these circumstances developed independence and powers of self-motivation. They were asked many questions, but seldom given ready-made answers. They were on the edge of discovery most of the time and aware that technique should serve as a means to an end. Creative activity can be seen to be absorbing and fulfilling. Many of the fine art students said that they liked the flexible arrangements, usually the minimum of signing in, yet the opportunity to work during the evenings and week-ends if they wished. In certain situations there could however be problems, as Ken Rowat points out.



## Problems in the Fine Art Departments

Ken Rowat writes of the troubled history of art schools and in particular of the predicament for students in fine art departments. He asks if we are justified in dividing fine art graduates into four classes of achievement when even at the highest level there is so much disagreement about what constitutes art.

Of the 48 institutions offering degree courses in the practice of art, 41 run a fine art course. This means few restrictions and little formal teaching and no clear-cut career prospects for the students. In many ways these departments offer an exciting opportunity for students wishing to become artists. However, there are problems arising partly from the present situation in the art world. People training in textiles, graphics, ceramics or photography have specific skills to learn, their courses can have definite content and they have practical reasons for attending their departments regularly. In fine art many of the old, traditional skills no longer apply or seem to have much relevance to the modern world. Progress in paint technology has made older approaches obsolete; sculpture may even be so loosely defined as: 'the modification of some aspect of the environment'. All this can open the door on adventure, originality and experimentation. It can also sometimes mean complete bewilderment for the students.

In visiting these departments signs of creativity have been noted and enjoyed. However, the negative aspect is apparent in most fine art departments. This has been well described by Ken

Rowat as follows: "But sure enough the scene was depressingly familiar. No staff, and one furtive looking student who quickly disappeared. The usual shanty town of improvised screens and discarded bric-a-brac. The few paintings mostly consisting of accumulations of arbitrary brushmarks, were almost outnumbered by badly lettered political slogans. Not that muddle matters, for art often comes out of chaos, but there is a world of difference between saw-dust which flies from the saw and that which has lain for months in the rain. What has gone wrong?"



Ken Rowat goes on to describe the present precarious climate of attitudes towards the visual arts, noting that even the making of art objects at all has been challenged. His advice to the fine art departments is important:

"We must be careful to allow on to these courses only those who already show ability to think originally or laterally, or whose work already shows a degree of originality. We must then expose these students for their three years to a constant flow of ideas and visual experiences through close contact with active practitioners and thinkers in their field."

And again:

"Art is not what it was even 10 years ago and social evolution is accelerating at a frightening pace. With no longer any established discipline as a base to work from, the art student bravely faces a devastating crossfire of questions about art and life. Only those who are themselves in the thick of battle can help him." 12

This, of course, is the plea for the emphasis to be placed on the part-time artist/art teacher in this area of art education.



A Longitudinal Study of Problem Finding in Art 13

Recent research carried out at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago has particular relevance to this chapter. The aims of the research - described in "The Creative Vision" - were to discover what type of individual becomes an art student, the choices made between the various art college specialities and how problem finding differs from problem solving. A follow up, several years after graduation, was undertaken in order to find out whether the predictions of success based on the problem finding model were accurate.

The inquiry focused on over 300 2nd and 3rd year students with a 'core' sample of 179. The sample consisted of 86 male and 93 female students specialising in fine art, art education, advertising arts and industrial arts. They were given cognitive, perceptual and personality tests and biographical questionnaires. A study was made of their ratings in terms of originality and artistic potential from the school records. It is interesting to note that when the personalities of art students were compared with those of 'normal' college students the typical image of the art student followed closely the expected profile: socially withdrawn, introspective, independent, imaginative, unpredictable, and alienated from community expectations.

As the study probed further into differences between the four main art school specialities it appeared that the future fine artists showed: "an extreme, almost exaggerated intensification of the basic artistic profile".<sup>14</sup> It was not artistic or any perceptual skills that differentiated the four groups, but rather temperament, attitudes, values and personality traits. The fine art students tended to be the ones most involved with creative problem finding, even at the risk of economic insecurity.



Relatively speaking the advertising and industrial art majors emphasised economic factors such as career security and the art educators stressed the importance of social values.

"Only people who are willing to reject the goals that are valued in the culture seem to have the required motivation to challenge accepted artistic forms and contribute truly new ones." It was further noted that for breadth and openness of experience required in creative work the artist must not be "excessively stereotyped in a masculine or feminine role."<sup>15</sup> When it came to wanting to study the creative process in depth a smaller group of students was necessary and the 35 male fine art majors were selected. Their profiles were the most extreme in terms of the characteristics related to artistic temperament.

At first the researchers watched the students at work, but this was found to be bewildering: "Some students brushed oil on canvas, others bent wire or poured concrete, chipped blocks of granite and carved wood; some made huge constructions and others fastidious line drawings. Some worked rapidly, others slowly; some daubed flecks of color on the canvas with a light brush, others smeared gobs of paint with a heavy trowel."<sup>16</sup> It was realised that it would be necessary to study earlier phases of the creative process, in other words the problem finding process. The central concern at this stage of the inquiry was with problem finding as distinct from working towards a known solution within an established framework. From this there followed the further question as to the relationship between problem finding and the originality of the product. It was felt that an open attitude and the willingness to delay the closure of a problem should contribute towards the ultimate emergence of a novel solution.

In an attempt to analyse this process an experimental studio



was set up and paper and dry media were provided, along with 27 objects ranging from a gearshift to a velvet hat. Each student came into the studio by himself. He was asked to select those objects that appealed to him, arrange them on another table and draw them. He was told that the aim of the drawing was to produce something that pleased him. A running record was made of the student's progress, marks were awarded for selecting unusual objects, experimenting with moving parts and creating something that went beyond straightforward representation or obvious types of solutions. The students were interviewed afterwards and the work was judged by lay and artist judges. It was required to know whether those students using open, problem finding approaches also produced work of higher aesthetic value and originality, as compared with those operating at the level of merely accepting a presented problem. It was found that there was a high correlation between discovery orientation during the artistic process and the originality of the product. Creative teachers know this intuitively and arrange situations accordingly.

These students were contacted again five or six years after graduation and nearly one third of them were deeply involved with fine art. On the whole it would seem that factors such as artistic temperament traits, being open to novelty and looking at problems as if they had never been formulated before were helpful for the success of these artists. However, it must also be noted that the traits needed for dealing with the world of galleries and dealers are of the opposite kind to those needed for the production of original work and this presents something of a dilemma.

It is interesting to observe that however objective the research in this field tries to be and however much useful knowledge emerges, the creative process itself remains elusive.



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## **CHAPTER III**

### **Creativity and the Teaching Student**



## Introduction

This chapter begins with some general comments on the importance of a creative approach in education, these are followed by more specific methods in art education, references to research on the subject and to 'Child Art'. Adult students at varying stages are then considered: The students attending the Manchester College of Higher Education, Art Induction Course and two B.Ed. students from Manchester University at intervals during their course until their Degree Show. The final part of the chapter deals with attitudes of several old students, following through their teacher-training experiences to their present teaching situations.



## General Comments on the need for a Creative Approach in Education

If young people are to grow up with the best opportunity for the development of their creative potential, it is necessary to give continuing attention to the ways in which the teaching of teachers may be improved to this end. E.P. Torrance et al. (1961) taught teachers the following five principles of how to teach creatively: "1. treat pupils' questions with respect; 2. treat imaginative ideas with respect; 3. show pupils that their ideas have value; 4. permit pupils to do some things 'for practice' without threat of evaluation; and 5. tie evaluation in with causes and consequences." <sup>1</sup> Teaching in this way tends to encourage originality, fluency, elaboration and flexibility. Teachers that are inclined to be authoritarian, defensive, insensitive to their pupils and over concerned with time schedules are unlikely to be successful in this kind of work.

According to J.B. Wiesner, there should be encouragement and stimulation of imaginative and unconventional interpretations of experience: "It is important, especially in childhood and early youth, that novel ideas and unconventional patterns of action should be more widely tolerated, not criticized too soon and too often." <sup>2</sup> The highly creative pupil, on account of his individuality and divergent tendencies, will have different thought patterns and different ways of behaving from other pupils. Teachers need to be trained to take these deviations in their stride, in order that creativity may not be adversely affected.

M.I. Stein says that: "New ideas for teaching methods and teaching content have to be developed. They would sustain the curiosity, interest and motivation of manifestly creative students



and stimulate the creativity of those other students who have not yet fulfilled their potential." 3

J. Douglas Brown, on the subject of "The Development of Creative Teacher-Scholars", says: "... the art of teaching is itself creative, if well performed. The teacher must constantly find new ways to communicate old ideas and new ideas and to nurture the development of ideas and understanding in his students." 4

He refers to the excitement of the teacher-scholar in the creative process and the way this carries over into the excitement of helping others in the gaining of deeper insights.

It is as if there is a twofold type of enjoyment for such a person, his own individual response and the use to which this may be put through a rippling effect in educational situations.

J. Douglas Brown places great emphasis on the attribute of intuition. He says that it is a mysterious quality of subconscious association of ideas that leads on to the combination of ideas to form new ideas, that is the essence of the creative process: "It involves discovery and not logic alone. It grows out of accumulated experience, but it transcends the conscious analysis which made that experience useful." 5

He goes on to say that the intuitive instinct in a potentially creative teacher-scholar can be dulled by his own habits of mind or by his environment. He stresses the importance of courage to break with convention, the avoidance of undue respect for authority and the dangers of over-concentration in a single field of experience. A liberal education is seen as a vital resource. It is the interplay of ideas and approaches from differing fields of learning and experience that is of special significance. It is the power of intuition to gather



riches and strength in this way that leads on to the making of a truly creative teacher-scholar.

"Academic freedom, in the last analysis, is the freedom to think intuitively about all possible answers to man's questions about the unknown or the unresolved." 6

According to Eisner and Ecker: "Research in creativity has probably raised more questions than it has answered. How can creative work in art be distinguished from work that is merely bizarre? Is the same type of classroom environment conducive to creative performance for all students, or do different students need different types of environments in order to function creatively? How much experience in depth in art is needed before an individual is likely to function creatively? Does creative development in one area affect creative performance in another? Do art contests, art awards, and grading in art hamper or help the child's creative development?" The authors say that art education is now reassessing some of its most cherished beliefs concerning the artistic development of man. Old answers, dogma and superstition are no longer seen as adequate. 7

H. Rugg puts in a plea for nothing less than a revolution in the education of teachers. Freedom from externally imposed restrictions is described as only half the battle. There must be the development of "the inner freedom of the relaxed threshold mind of intuitive discovery." 8

Most of these ideas carry an important message in relation to the main theme of this thesis: It must be stressed that in the training of teachers innovation needs to be encouraged. This may be done partly through philosophy of education, but also through teaching methods.



## Methods of Approach in Art

Research carried out by American psychologists such as John Michael, Robert Burkhardt and Kenneth Beittel is highly relevant to the theme of this thesis and should be mentioned:

J. Michael says: "Recent studies indicate that adolescents tend to approach their art work with either a preconceived idea of what they intend the final product to be (product-oriented) or with little or no precise idea concerning the final product, a trial-and-error approach (process-oriented)." <sup>9</sup>

Michael has carried out studies of both the high school and the junior high school levels; he says that the results show that art products of pupils using the trial-and-error approach received a higher rating on aesthetic quality than the products of the pupils using the preconceived approach. The studies also show that extrinsic awards and standards tend to diminish the use of the trial-and-error methods, since they direct attention towards the final product. <sup>10</sup>

In the early 1960s Michael and Burkhardt examined the main characteristics of pupils following these approaches and Burkhardt identified the two groups in the way indicated below:

<u>Spontaneous Group</u>	<u>Deliberate Group</u>
Process orientation	Product orientation
Intuitive development	Preconceived forms
Mistakes often taken as a challenge	Mistakes often considered 'wrong' and a threat
Dynamic visualizations	Static visualizations
Unrealistic symbolic orientation	Realistic orientation
Often student unaware of passing of time	Time element considered
Expressive objectives	Technical objectives
Increasing interest for working process	Declining interest in working process
Variety in concepts of detail	Monotonous in concepts of detail



Enjoyment of new media in spite of difficulty	Disgust with difficulties presented by new media
Working all over picture	Work on one section at a time
Alteration of concepts during working process	Persistent adherence to one theme
broad range of positive to negative feelings accompanied by rapid changes in mood	Narrow range of response; static or gradual changes in mood

11

Michael points out that the implications from this type of research suggest the need for an open-ended, flexible approach to creative art expression. As far back as 1947 Viktor Lowenfeld contrasted Self-Expression with Imitation in a similar way.<sup>12</sup> Elliot W. Eisner says that perhaps the most sustained research in creativity in relation to art education has been carried out by Burkhardt.<sup>13</sup> Burkhardt undertook further studies with K.R. Beittel and 47 junior art education majors participated in an art learning experiment for one month.

Beittel and Burkhardt became aware of another working strategy in art apart from the Spontaneous and Deliberate ones. They described it as 'Divergent'. It was felt that the object of this strategy could be identified as primarily discovery, whereas the objective of the Spontaneous students was basically problem-solving. The term 'Deliberate' was dropped in favour of 'Academic' for the third group. The research was therefore described as: "Strategies of Spontaneous, Divergent and Academic Art Students". A strategy may be regarded as a total system of behaviour including procedures and goals. It is a useful term to employ to describe what is really going on.

Both the Spontaneous and the Divergent approaches may be seen as dynamic strategies and the Academic approach as static. "With a Spontaneous student, the problem is held constant and the



procedure is varied until an appropriate procedure emerges which leads to the solution of the problem. Thus the innovation in Spontaneous work is procedural. The Divergent student varies the goal rather than the procedure. He controls the process in order to search intellectually for ideas which will lead to new discoveries." 14 The two approaches are compared with Beethoven and Bach. The two types of individual may work in a complementary way together. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell cooperating on 'Principia Mathematica' is given as a scholarly example of this.

Spontaneous students seem to accept and even welcome the tension between the problem and its intangibility. They show a preference for words such as 'unpredictable' and 'diffuse'. They tend to work in the hope of making a problem progressively clearer. Divergent students tend to manifest qualities of inventiveness and organisational innovation. They guard against prediction as their interest lies in discovery rather than in solutions.

"The Academic student chooses a known technique by which to proceed to a known goal. He thus operates under a static strategy. In focusing only on control, both procedure and objective are held constant and there is no innovative quality to the system. The Academic student is thus more like a technician who concentrates on competency. Alas!" 15

The Academic student tends to accept the realistic nature of a stimulus, perhaps because the exaggeration of elements or imaginative developments suggest insecurity to such a person. Technical ability in drawing is very important to this type of student and this can be well demonstrated by representational approaches.



E.W. Eisner has noted that creativity in art does not seem to be characterised by any simple unitary trait. In his account of "A Typology of Creative Behavior" he describes an experiment with eighty-five sixth-grade students. They were asked to make a sculpture from clay and toothpicks and also to produce nine high speed creative drawings.

Four types of creativity and two loci constituted the classes of the typology. The types were:

- 1) Boundary Pushing, this may be described as the ability to redefine the limits of objects and the uses to which they may be put.
- 2) Inventing, or employing the known in order to create a new object or class of objects.
- 3) Boundary Breaking, understood as a rejection or reversal of accepted assumptions, making the 'given' problematic.
- 4) Aesthetic Organizing, described as the ability to confer order, harmony and unity upon matter.

The two loci were content and form.

One of the findings from the experiment related to Boundary Breaking being rather rare compared with the other types of creativity. Boundary Breaking leads to a challenging of basic ways of thinking or modes of expression. Copernicus, Einstein and Kandinsky may be taken as extreme examples of this.

Eisner notes that: "Individuals able to escape the limits of heavily embedded cultural expectations are always rare." 10

There is a message here for the educator, and especially for the art educator, with reference to the importance of identifying and encouraging the pioneering types of thinking and expression.



According to Torrance, creative learners learn by searching, manipulating, experimenting, even playing around. Torrance makes specific recommendations for the teacher who wants to encourage creative thinking in his pupils, he suggests the provision of:-

- a) experiences calculated to sensitize children to environmental stimuli.
- b) encouragement of constructive rather than critical attitudes towards information.
- c) warming-up activities or mind stretching sessions.
- d) avoidance of example-giving, which may freeze or unduly shape student thinking.
- e) avoidance of evaluative comments during creative activity.
- f) unevaluated practice sessions.
- g) avoidance of critical peer evaluation during creative activity.
- h) the occasional grouping of students into small homogeneous groups to reduce social stress.
- i) expectation on the part of the teacher for original thinking and rewarding the pupil for it. 17

It would seem that the teacher needs to take special care to avoid the interfering approach.

Turning to the more specifically aesthetic aspect of creative art education: R.W. Witkin in "The Intelligence of Feeling" sees aesthetic structuring in terms of eight categories: contrast, semblance, discord, harmony, polarity, identity, dialectic and synthesis. 18 Malcolm Koss places impulse at the centre of the arts curriculum and thinks in terms of improvising variations on the theme of personal creativity. He thinks in terms of an arts



curriculum with imaging, senses, media and craftsmanship encircling impulse, and the element of play encircling everything. He says: "Art teachers must understand creative self-expression as a way of knowing, and know when to intervene and when not to; they must recognize the stresses and rhythms of the experience, and discern the direction and speed of the impulsive thrust." Ross states that technique should never be taught simply for its own sake. However, he points out, that limitations of technique have to be recognized as limitations of a person's expressive vocabulary. Ross sees the main function of the teacher of art to be related to processes of discovery, focus and support. He summarises the phases of the whole process in the following way:

1. Stimulus encounter
2. Felt disturbance (positive or negative mood)
3. Models of expressive formulae (deep structure)
4. Projection of impulse through medium
5. Making of a holding form (centring)
6. Reciprocation and refinement
7. Resolution of expressive problem in feeling form (icon)
8. Felt consummation (self-actualization)
9. Sharing (evaluation and communication)

The teacher has a key role at every point along the way. 19



## Child Art

This thesis is mainly concerned with the adult field. However, since this chapter is about the teaching student, it is desirable to glance at the subject of Child Art. This is the training area of most of the students and the area they plan to enter, at any rate initially.

Firstly, on the subject of the literature of the subject, two books seem to stand out as the major masterpieces of the century on this subject: "Education through Art", by H. Read; and "Creative and Mental Growth", by V. Lowenfeld. It is several decades since these books first appeared, but they have provided, and continue to provide, a background of significant influence for people working the field.

On the first page of his book H. Read states that his thesis is: "that art should be the basis of education". 20 V. Lowenfeld, in his first chapter, speaks of the double function of art education in terms of self-expression and self-adjustment. He offers some very important advice to the teacher: "Don't impose your own images on a child! Never prefer one child's creative work over that of another! Never let a child copy anything!" 21

Florence Cane should be mentioned for her book: "The Artist in Each of Us". A book that deals with the child and the adult, with art education and art as therapy; and with a lively interplay between theory and its application. The emphasis is placed on the need for the individual to have faith in himself. There is a warning to overhasty teachers who may hinder the free flowing work of the child by imposing instruction on him, rather than guiding him towards his own individual style of expression. Imaginative life is seen as highly significant and art as the means for its enjoyment. 22



In the realms of Child Art we come face to face with a problem that is both psychological and philosophical. The psychological problem of the child mind and the philosophical problem of freedom. The individual has a need of self-expression, but he has also to discover the self through the process of growth involving continuous impact with external reality in the form of parents, teachers and civilisation. Presumably the child selects from his environment whatever is appropriate to his needs. But each selection modifies the nature of that person in some degree and selection can only be made within the terms of the opportunities provided by the environment. The situation is somewhat paradoxical because differentiated maturity is reached by appropriate selection and this requires insight.

perhaps the most the teacher can do is provide a range of potentially enriching and stimulating experiences. Success may be measured by the range of imaginative responses over a period of time.

There is certainly enthusiasm for Child Art as may be seen from the picture galleries shown in Children's tv programmes and the national exhibitions that cause an invasion 70,000 strong as a typical response.- entries not people.

Tom Hudson, writing in the catalogue of one such National Exhibition of Children's Art, suggests that we stop worrying about Art and think and act in a more Creative way. He says: "The creative act is a great force for integration in the personality and a significant force for integration of society. We should promote, and expect to receive work in new forms, new structures, new combinations of media. Pupils and teachers should feel able to cut across the distinctions between disciplines throw aside restrictive labels; finding and inventing whatever



language and form is necessary to produce their personal ideas."

23

Perhaps some examples of personal experience as a teacher may be of interest at this point:

On one occasion a group of 15 year old girls asked if they could go out onto a rubbish dump during an art class. Just near the school there was a factory and as a consequence great mounds of earth like mountains and in the valleys barrels, tins, bricks, buckets, frames, coils of wire, hoops, ladders and all kinds of castaway objects. It may not seem a very exciting approach to a school, but from this material the children produced quite amazing designs: slender purple tubes rising towards the sky, black silhouettes of fantastic form floating across turquoise clouds, grey clouds across the sun, red triangles, forms receding into space, amethyst and green diamond forms, blue precipices and pinnacles, strange trees suspended in the air, crimson cubes, black spirals great solid forms twisting and interlocking with each other. It seemed like a rubbish heap transformed into wonderland.

Imaginative subjects included, for example: Moonlight Fantasy, Flower Ballet, The Nut Cracker Suite, Guards of the Woods, Astronomy, Mystery, The Future and Joy.

It is good for children to work on some large artistic project from time to time. This provides a social as well as an aesthetic experience and links co-operative activity with creative work. At Christmas, for instance, scores of children have taken part in the decorating of the school hall. One year they were given the theme of "Fire and Ice". They cut out large shapes from rolls of red, gold, blue and silver metallic paper, and fastened them onto the black stage curtains. The central



curtain was used for a gigantic red sun with flaming prominences and dancing fire birds and dragons whirling from it. The smaller curtains had re-echoing flame patterns. Other curtains round the hall carried the complementary theme of 'Jack frosts' and icicles. Some of the children produced large pictures of ice grottoes and glaciers or snow crystals. The same subject was used for the fancy dress; fire dragons, ice queens and composite creatures abounded.

This kind of work provides scope for children with very varied abilities in art. There is the opportunity for those with imaginative powers to plan the main designs, the chance for those with organising flair to take the initiative and for even the most hesitant the enjoyment of making flames or icicles.

It is always rewarding for a teacher to observe the very personal type of artistic development that takes place over a period of time with certain individuals. For example, one child produced a painting entitled 'The Future'. After she had left school she went into an office, but continued to draw and paint. Her choice of subjects included science, music and mystery themes. A new 'future' picture showed steps, and underneath she had written: "Although the steps into the future look firm, what is below and beyond is vague, isolated and unsteady."

Underneath her black and white 'Mystery' picture she had written: "The weirdness of mystery is fully illustrated in this picture. The vague and unknown are both symbolised by the uncertain black lines spreading unsteadily over the page. The ghost-like forms and wavering sprays give a very appropriate look to the picture which completes this mysterious study."

This girl clearly felt a continuing need for self-expression and for art as a form of therapy outside the psychiatric field.



Manchester College of Higher EducationElizabeth Gaskell Site

At this college students preparing to be teachers are able to study alongside those with other careers in mind. According to the Prospectus: "The courses offered are designed to avoid the narrowness of outlook which can occur in too specialised a college. Students who are unsure of their commitments to teaching or to any other career are able to defer their final choice until the end of the first year."

The first term of the course for BEd, BA and BSc degrees has been designed to help the students to decide on the course to take and the subjects to study. The Art Induction Course was held on Wednesday mornings during the autumn of 1978, and this was visited four times in order to observe methods of approach and developments.

Often, in paying visits to colleges one sees completed or near completed work. It was particularly helpful to be allowed to watch the early stages of a project. The tutor said that she thought that being provocative and challenging to students was the best way to encourage their creativity. She also stressed the importance of requiring effort. Early in November she introduced the group to the idea of creativity, creative traits, the significance of flexibility and of divergent thinking. This apparently followed on from an exploration of the nature of perception. Then there was a brain-storming session, during which the students were given the themes of trees, buildings and things you cannot see. They were asked to note down their visual ideas using felt pens on a large table covered with white paper. It was important that they understood from the beginning that there were many ways of approaching these themes apart from the obvious



ones; or what each individual until then had thought was obvious. This was really opening up the mind.

There were interesting trees and buildings in the area that could be used, and in fact some sketches had already been done in relation to the subject of perception. However further types of exploration were now required. The emphasis was placed on originality and diversification and on translation of ideas into a whole range of different media. The results over the next month were fascinating.

Perhaps to zoom in on the group part way through may now be useful: One student had sketched a group of trees suggesting a wood. They were simple, cone-like forms and she had decided to experiment with plaster of Paris; at this stage she was feeling very excited about her first plaster tree, holding like a cornet and maybe thinking of the subject of art multiples. Another student was uncertain but seemed to be thinking in terms of jigsaw shapes. Then there was the willow tree in the process of turning into a tree-man, with a face appearing in the bark, the branches becoming hair and some leaves representing tears. It could have been symbolic of the sadness of autumn. But another student had captured the radiant glory of autumn in orange, red and golden patterns based on tree forms and whirling leaves. He had probably had his attention drawn to the spaces between the shapes, and how these could become the point of departure for abstraction. It is interesting the way realism and abstraction interlock in shapes and the spaces between. Another member of the group was painting a Japanese style parasol in miniature with coloured inks, delicate and fairylike; in contrast nearby a modern spherical form was being constructed from slotted cardboard sections. Yet another person was working on trees seen



through prison bars. There were signs of tree and cloud forms in startling shades of pink, they were to be used in a collage and the background was being considered. The tutor said that she would not interfere at this stage, but she did offer the suggestion that a solution may be found in photography. Amid the varied emerging patterns there arose a 'hand' tree made of newspaper and wire.

Perhaps one of the most interesting experiments was being carried out by a student who should be described in more detail: Christopher had worked for eleven years in industrial design and computer science; now his ambition was to become an art teacher. He said that he was interested in progressing from the straightforward sketching of detail towards freer approaches, in looking for certain themes and in making an exploration of perception and the ambiguity of form. He seemed to be in the process of changing from the convergent to the divergent attitude of mind. He was aware also that eventually these ideas would be helpful in his work with children. In his sketch-book there were examples of perceptual puzzles, the cube, the hollow form and the pyramid were favourite geometrical shapes. He had taken a photograph of some very ordinary railings, the perspective suggesting to his mind the idea of constancy. He had the feeling that he could combine some of his sketch-book shapes by placing them in the spaces between the railings.

At the end of the term a visit to this group offered the last chance to see the work prior to the January exhibition: The plaster trees now took their place; stark, white and sophisticated, mounted on a wooden base, beautifully grained and polished. The jig-saw shapes had become a well-balanced composition entitled: "The Christmas Puzzle Tree". The autumnal paintings had been



arranged to follow a development from the most obvious to the more subtle interpretations of the subject. The student working on the sunshade idea had designed a miniature pagoda by building up a series of delightful almost ethereal parasols to form a three dimensional structure. The trees and clouds in startling pinks had been cut out of a shiny material to emphasize the quality of 'unreality'. Christopher had decided on a different tactic, and instead of his sketch-book shapes, he was experimenting with smaller views of his 'railing-scape' within the spaces between the railings, and even smaller views within the smaller spaces. From an initially ordinary subject he had managed to create a complex and unusual effect suggesting infinity and movement along a series of escalators. From approaches of this kind it is possible to use photographic and printing technics in a most exciting way.

In studying a group of this kind, it is interesting to note a whole range of ways of developing and exploiting the initial idea. Some students knew from the beginning what they were about. For example, the girl who created the pink trees and clouds, said, in the very first week of the project: "I hope to produce a relief study in perspex or some shiny material". Others found their ideas from the process of experimentation with materials; and Christopher had an idea that was itself capable of an imaginative evolution as the weeks went by.

Apart from the practical work in art the students were encouraged to look at prints of famous paintings and consider certain features relating to perception: Are colours strengthened or reduced? To what extent are images whole or fragmented? Are images clear or vague? Are the qualities of clarity and vagueness the same throughout the picture? Has irrelevant detail been



excluded? They were also given the opportunity of recording their personal reactions to a series of paintings with reference to such qualities as imaginative, meaningful, dynamic etc. These researches seemed to be leading to the view that, although there may be a measure of general agreement, when it came to more specific reactions "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

The group were also studying the psychological aspects of creativity. One student had written: "Creativity results in novel ideas" and another had noted that creativity may be concerned with the restructuring of existing patterns of knowledge in a new way. What seemed particularly helpful for those thinking in terms of teaching was an essay topic relating to an examination of how and under what conditions creativity occurs: The question was being asked "Can these conditions be created for educational purposes?" Those thinking of teaching were also having one day per week in the schools during the first term. The two basic strands: How can I become creative? and How can I help others to be creative? were being catered for on this course.

Perhaps one of the most significant features of the course was the way in which a teacher with an interest in brain-storming and the creative process could get results! Original and exciting ideas and themes emerged and evolved from students, many of whom were diffident and uncertain about the outcome at the early stages.



A Visit to see Two Old Students now at the Manchester Polytechnic

7/11/78

Gillian P. Schafer

In 1974-75 Gillian, as a student at the College of Adult Education, took Ordinary Level Art and showed signs of creative potential. She produced 'Insect Drama' for the 'Mock' and obtained a Grade A for the main examination. She won a prize for a collage of a train made from waste materials and sprayed with gold paint.

Now, in 1978, she was in her final year of a B.Ed. course at the Polytechnic.

Gillian continued to display great enthusiasm for creative exploration. She was very much absorbed with the 'Insect' theme in all its ramifications in terms of form and media. During a two hour conversation she described some of her current avenues of approach to the subject. She had just visited an apiary at Knutsford and had obtained some dead bees and honeycomb. Her obvious delight in the whole subject was very inspiring. She talked of the beauty of bees, moths and grasshoppers and she had collected some very fine specimens. Photography came into the project, including close study of wings and feathery antennae. Turning the pages of an insect book she admired the exquisite design of compound eyes and the drama of metamorphosis.

Apart from seeing endless scope for abstract and textile patterns Gillian was very much involved with the introspective aspect and with the 'insect's eye view of the world'. She wanted to depict the minute structures of the veining network of leaves with this aim in mind.

Then she turned to her models of insects, some made from wire and paper and others from chicken wire. They suggested



movement and a whole world of fantasy and fairy-tale humour. She spoke of other models made of gauze-like materials and of metallic possibilities through parallels with motor-cycle and motor-car fronts.

In another room her experiments with clay were in process of development towards the making of tiles. Here again the use of insect patterns as the source of inspiration.. There were plans for the exploitation of the tunnelling lines of beetles in wood. The over-all pattern of the tunnel and its radiating canals looking something like a sunburst.

Finally, there were her amazing honeycombs, again using chicken wire, its hexagonal structure ideal for the purpose. An enlarged honeycomb of wire was covered with fibre-glass and yellow cotton wool cocoons were covered with polythene. There were plans for an intriguing hive.

When Gillian had first embarked upon her specialised course she had asked herself the basic question: What is art? From the evidence of her work it was apparent that the answer would not be given via an imposed or stereotyped response. Here indeed was an explicit example of a creative individual in action, typically spontaneous and sensitive and carried along on a voyage of discovery.

Gillian said that she would like to teach infants. This blend of visual research with playfulness seems an ideal type of preparation. There are likely to be many happy hours ahead for the lucky children. Another possibility for the future may be the Master's Degree.



Gabrielle Davies

During 1973-74 Gai, as a student at the College of Adult Education, took Ordinary Level Art and showed signs of creative potential. For the 'Mock' examination she produced a flower fantasy composition in oranges, reds and purples using the helichrysums as a starting point. During 1974-75 she moved on to the Advanced Level Art and became seriously interested in art history as well as painting.

Now in 1978, she too was in her final year of a B.Ed. course at the Polytechnic.

Gai had developed an interest in a personal exploration of landscape. She said that she particularly enjoyed a scene as seen through an arch or doorway. At the Fletcher Moss Art Gallery at Didsbury she had made a detailed study of a doorway. After many hours of intensive work she decided to translate the subject into an embroidery. There was a response to the world of minute plants and the variation in the colours of grasses, perhaps showing a parallel kind of amazement as the newly sighted person. There was felt to be a special pleasure in visiting a rather wild type of landscape, such as Hebden Bridge, and watching the weather come over the hills.

Currently Gai was working on a pile of autumn leaves, a subject offering scope for experimentation in terms of colour and composition and a range of media from water colour to oils and screen printing. In printing she wanted a transparent feeling and had listed some of her difficulties. The problems may seem like technical ones, but they were closely linked with creative objectives and a concern with perception.

Ultimately Gai felt she might specialise in some form of remedial education or art therapy.



Another Visit27/3/79

On the occasion of this informal and unexpected visit to the Polytechnic, Gillian was planning a picture based on bees and honeycombs arising from her visit to the Knutsford apiary. High up on the wall there was a large painting, representing three weeks work, it depicted insect metamorphosis in a somewhat surrealistic way. Gillian was surrounded by photographs of bees taken in Knutsford, an amazing pen and ink study of insects and engravings arising from a metal plate and electric tool process. She had really created a "honeycomb environment" in her part of the studio with a collection of forms suggesting the theme, there was even part of an old spring mattress.

Gai was working on a picture in relief arising from a study she had made of an allotment near her home, she was exploiting the idea of the land being in layers. It was very interesting also to see the coloured sketches and large painting of the Fletcher Moss doorway described on an earlier visit. Gai said that they had both been helped very much by the attitude of their tutor: He had always been prepared to consider their ideas without ridicule, offering encouragement for them to develop along individual lines, yet giving worthwhile and constructive criticism.

In another part of the room a third student was working on a drawing of a weasel. She produced a second one from her case. They were the kind of thing that farmers hang up and looked not unlike mummies. Another student, not present at the time left evidence of an interest in foxes, with heads used in relation to human bodies. The whole atmosphere of the room suggested the right feeling for creative work. There seemed to be much to look forward to when the time came for the summer shows.



22/5/79

Looking back over her 4yr. course, Gillian said that the theoretical strands of the B.Ed. syllabus had been woven into the first three years and especially the second year. The areas of study covered art education, the psychology of education, the sociology of education and art history. The fourth year had provided more intensive opportunity for studio work and for the writing of essays. She had the idea of using a child in connection with her study of insects. He provided a stimulus and also enabled her to notice how his mind worked and the type of responses he made to the 'bees and honeycomb' theme. Gillian said that she felt very strongly that art should not have to be justified as part of the school curriculum, that it should hold a central place in education. She thought it important that education should escape from dreary and boring routines. Art offered a way in which other subjects could become more interesting, sometimes as part of a project, or as a spin-off from more imaginative approaches.

Display of Art for the B.Ed. Degree

12/6/79

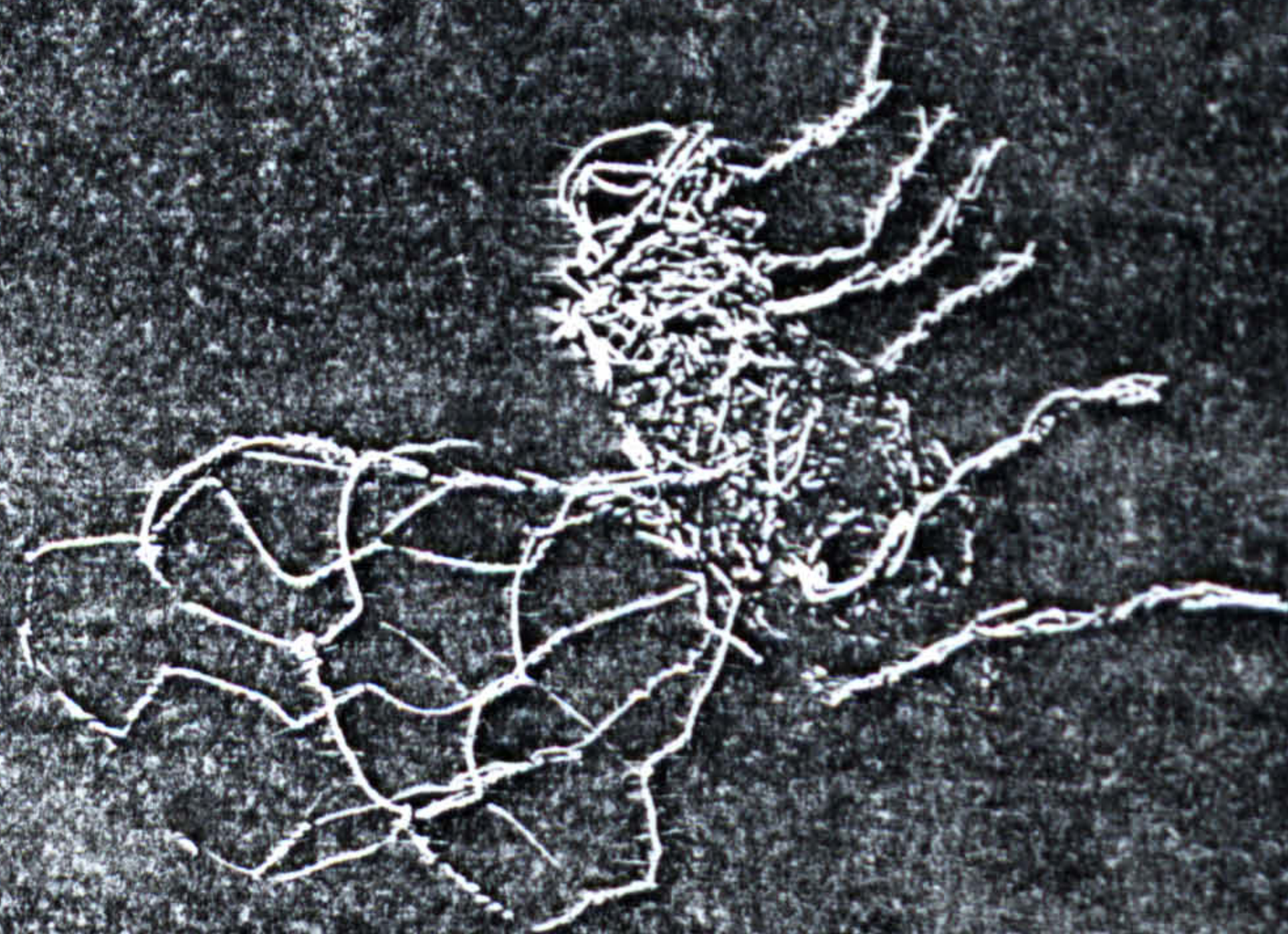
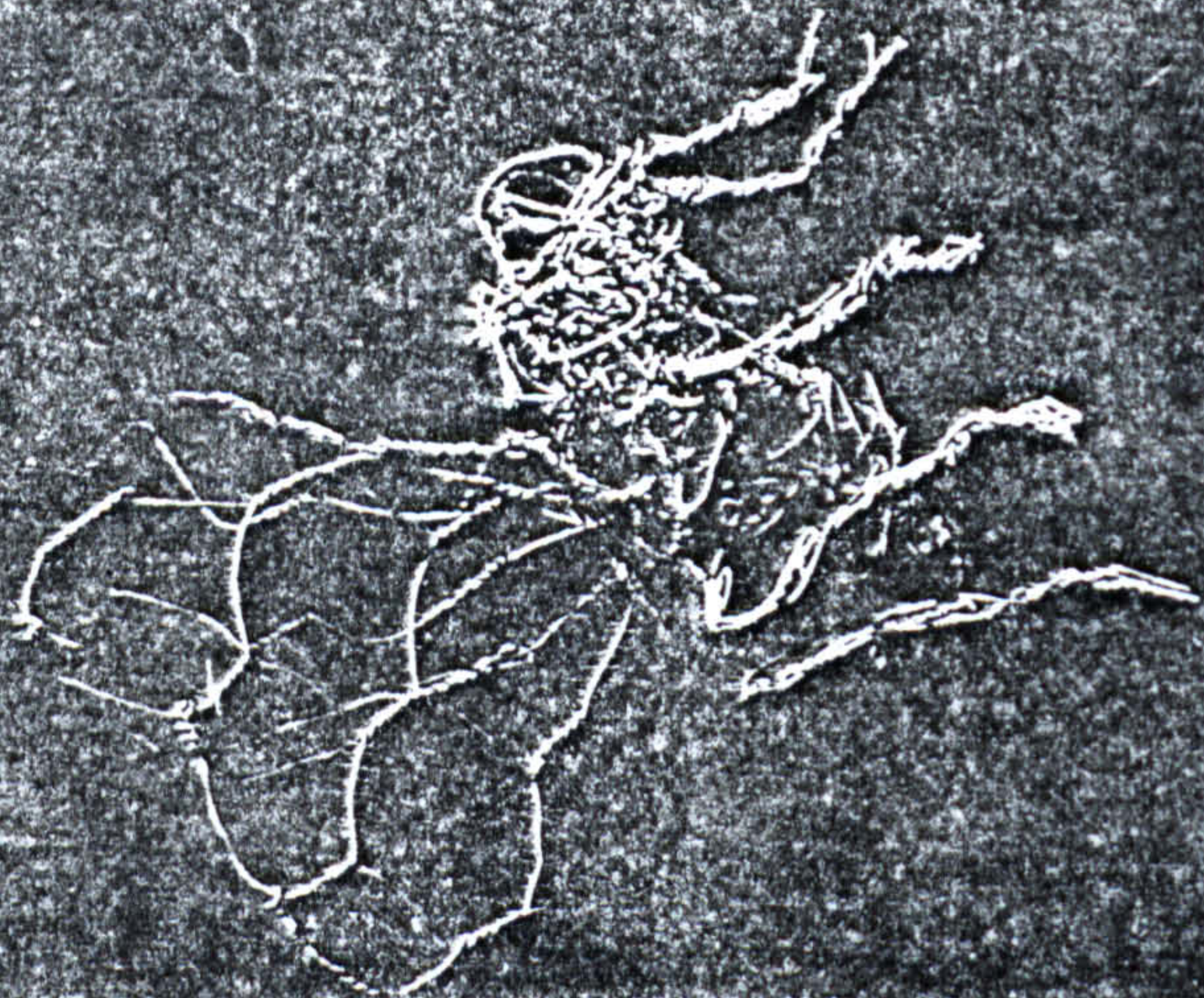
Here it was on display, the work seen at various stages during earlier visits: Gillian's amazingly detailed drawings of the delicate insect form, her large scale paintings of the honeycomb and metamorphic theme through egg, larva, pupa to imago. Especially fascinating were her interpretations of the pupal stage, with the organs of the adult bee visible through the transparent skin. Of interest too were her three dimensional structures of the hive, honeycomb and wire mobiles. The art of the child was also included in her display. He had made studies of bees emerging from chocolate trays, a clay bee attending to a cocoon, an insect entering a paper flower & a woolly glove puppet, brightly striped in orange and black and metallic gold, of a



Gillian P. Schafer

Bees made of wire









Gillian P. Schafer

O Level Art      Insect Drama      1975



B.Ed. Degree Painting      1979





Gabrielle Davies

O Level Art Everlasting Flowers 1974



B.Ed. Degree Painting Fletcher Moss Museum  
Door 1978



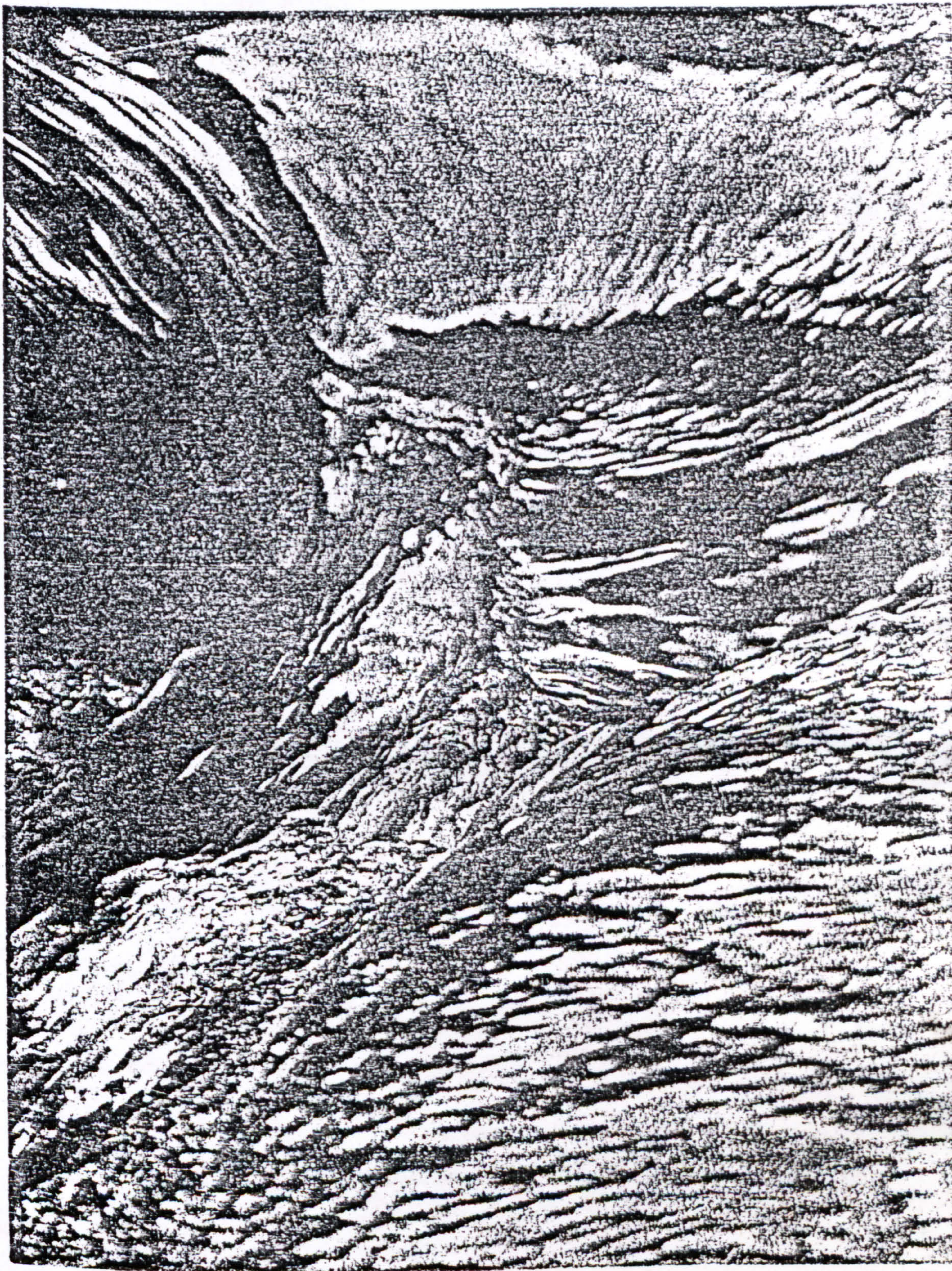
bec. There were also mobiles by six yr. olds. Gillian the teacher was in the process of emerging from Gillian the artist, as was apparent from this display.

Turning to Gai's work, her Fletcher Moss doorway was very much in evidence, building up through pencil study and photograph, to embroidered door with porch and large oil painting. Her enjoyment of plant forms was very clear, particularly wild grasses, of which there were drawings, photographs, paintings and a three dimensional model of a clump in fabric. The autumn leaves had been well exploited through drawing and painting to screen prints. Her relief painting of the allotment had been ingeniously built by using plywood covered with canvas.

A third student taking the same course was Susan. She also responded to trailing plant forms and combining painting with embroidery. Susan also had a special interest in stripes and had built up a series of pictures using the diagonal. Toffee papers provided her with a very lively subject, from drawing and painting of crumpled piles of such papers she finally produced a large embroidered work in high relief. Stripes and bold colours were of the essence of this work, no title was given but it could have been called 'Summer' or 'Holiday'.

N.B. Although these students studied art within the Manchester Polytechnic they really belonged to the University of Manchester School of Education.





Photograph of the Meeting of Three Streams by Hilary





One of a series of photographs based on the Holly Theme  
by Hilary



Attitudes of some of my Old, Mature Students from the College of  
Adult Education (O&/or A Level Art) following through their  
subsequent Teacher-training and Teaching Experiences

Hilary obtained a grade 'A' at 'A' Level Art and moved on to teacher-training in 1969. She enjoyed the course and developed a special interest in imaginative photography, taking pictures of, for example, spiky plants, sea-weeds, rock and bark textures, old rope, ships, fair ground machinery, fireworks and illuminations, waterfalls and turbulent streams. She became particularly inspired by the life and work of Van Gogh and even visited his grave at Auvers. For her dissertation theme Hilary selected Art Therapy and helped with art groups in a psychiatric day department. In this way she obtained insight and practical experience also maintaining personal contact through a mutual interest. As a young person she showed remarkable feeling for the patients. When she moved on to the teaching of children she found the planning of art lessons very stimulating. She is at present giving her attention to her own family, but must inevitably return to some aspect of education one day. Hilary has always been eager to carry on with her own creative work. One very lively example comes to mind: A painting in vivid blues, very free and expressionistic, of the turbulent water theme. Hilary had visited the Three Shires Bridge and found the meeting of three streams a highly potent subject. She had taken photographs of the area, but the painting became almost abstract, a symphony in blue.

Alice obtained a good grade in 'A' Level Art in 1970 and made the following observation in a letter: "You never disheartened anyone and always had a kind word. It does make such a difference, especially to mature students, as it takes some courage to take up studying after a long lapse."



During her teaching course Alice wrote several letters in which she made the following comments: "The tutors are nice men, but their lectures are so disorganised." and again of the art tutor in particular she made a number of half humorous criticisms. "He's a real Job.'s comforter. He either finds fault or just grunts at everything." "... He is a queer, detached type whom one can't approach. He keeps giving essays on work which we should have covered, but he does n't seem to have got round to. Its all very confusing."

However, as time went on Alice probably enjoyed the course better, and especially the opportunity for fabric printing in the third year. She is now in her sixth year of teaching junior children. As a class teacher she has' to deal with many other subjects apart from art, but she likes the work. In a recent conversation she said that she thought the teacher-training course was a good one - "Distance lends enchantment to the view!"

Mavis had also obtained a good grade in Advanced Level Art. She too had undertaken her teacher-training in the early 1970s, but not at the same college as the one attended by Alice. She felt that her interest in art history had been aroused during the Advanced Level Art course, opening up many other areas for comparative study, such as religion, philosophy and politics. At training college she thought that this subject had been somewhat neglected. The teaching was disjointed, spasmodic and rarely followed up with written work. She felt that more advice could have been given on reading as "There is too much sentimental waffle and intellectual pretension in the majority of books on art history." On the practical side Mavis felt that the subject was treated in a "Do it yourself" way. She realised that there was a danger in stifling creativity and individuality by a too



didactic form of teaching. She states that it is obviously desirable that these qualities be nurtured, but in seeking to do this the art teacher often seems to be afraid of giving any instruction at all. "Surely the basic craft of any art form can be taught, to give a student the foundation from which to work out his own individual style. With subjects such as pottery, printing, weaving, photography etc. the student is more likely to be given basic instruction. Painting seems to be the area most left to the student to grasp himself." Mavis goes on to say that such things as glazing and scumbling with oil paints, laying on washes with water-colour, the different ways acrylics can be handled, considerations of value and tone and many other things are left for the student to 'snatch out of the air'.

Mavis has been teaching in an infant school for several years now. She has found that art education can be interwoven with the rest of the curriculum. "Nearly all children in the infant school enjoy art. It is very rare, in my experience, to find one who does not. I sometimes wonder what happens to this natural enthusiasm for practising art. Is it a natural loss, or is it due to the type of art teaching that goes on in schools? Some infants produce work which is a delight, having an inborn sensibility to colour and form. Even those whose feeling for art is less sure, derive pleasure and satisfaction from the activity. Children of this age are interested in talks about colours and shapes in good picture books and in their environment. With thirty odd children in a class and many other subjects to be covered, time obviously limits what can be done.

My final thought is that there is now a greater need than ever for good art education. Art in all its forms could provide much satisfaction and sense of purpose for people in the age of



Marigold

Original: poster  
paint on  
black



Copy of Pauline's 1st  
flower in Oct. 1969.  
She often laughed  
about it!



Pauline Wilby

Anemones: March 1970





the silicon chip."

Pauline had previously worked in her husband's business, and after he left her, on a routine job. At the age of 39yrs. she felt that she had to make a fresh start. She first attended the College of Adult Education and worked part-time. In 1970 she obtained good results in O Level, including art. Then she moved on to teacher-training, for three years, specialising in art, which she found very rewarding and exciting. Now, after nearly six years of teaching she is absolutely delighted with her work. She teaches art to secondary school pupils, covering pottery, collage, weaving, screen printing and painting. Pauline is a good example of how creative the mature student can become in her life style. Her own son appears to be following her example and is also training for teaching. (See p.146a)

Joan had seven children, mostly of school age, when she attended the College of Adult Education, on a part-time basis from 1969-70. She enjoyed the art classes, especially the plant studies, and - after an initial block - the abstract painting. She interpreted such subjects as "Day and Night" and "Dragons in Conflict" in a highly non-figurative way. She obtained an average grade for her O Level Art examination and proceeded to a 3 yr. teacher-training course, specialising in dress - needlework and art. She then moved on to teach infants for three years, with the opportunity for creative work in art. She is now working with a pre-school group of forty children, with one assistant. Joan is interested in child development and finds the link between art and psychology fascinating. The area is a deprived one, but all the children enjoy art, especially free expression in colour. They are encouraged to design animals such as giraffes and crocodiles, linking forms with words.



Pearl obtained an 'A' grade in Advanced Level Art, in 1973, and then went on to train for teaching, specialising in art. She said that there had been many frustrating experiences in connection with her teacher-training course. She felt that the students had been left to their own devices too much. The tutors seemed to be more interested in planning their own exhibitions. She also thought that there was a lack of good, helpful books on modern art education.

In her own teaching experience with senior pupils she also felt somewhat frustrated. She expressed the view that the below average in intelligence were not sufficiently motivated and were not getting enough out of art. Creativity seemed to require maturity and innovatory ability. The O Level Art examinations seemed restricting, especially from the point of view of limited time. She felt uncertain what the examiners were looking for. The results were often the reverse of what was expected. Pearl had been trained for juniors and now that she was teaching the older children she felt that she was being left to sort things out for herself and that she was floundering.

However, perhaps she really needs to accept that there has to be an element of uncertainty in art, it easily becomes too formal and lifeless if everything is cut and dried.

Pauline Quinn had attended the College of Adult Education from 1972-74, and taken, among other subjects, O & A Level Art. She had shown herself to be an eager and talented student, and moved on to teacher-training with geography and art as her main areas of interest. There was an element of disappointment in the art at training college, partly because there were no lectures on art history, a subject she so much enjoyed. However, she did find time for reading and thought the art books were also very



helpful with reference to suggestions for use with children; although Pauline was never short of ideas of her own. She was now teaching junior children and finding it very stimulating. The school had "Open Plan" teaching and there were ninety pupils and three teachers in the bay. She had the opportunity to teach art for every afternoon during every third half term, alternating with the other two teachers, and taking geography and history during the other periods. She said that seven and eight year olds were a pleasure to teach and showed much imagination in their artistic efforts. Pauline seemed to be covering the basic elements of colour, line and shape, following the way she had been taught in 1972. She said that when she first attended the classes at the College of Adult Education there was no idea in her mind of becoming a teacher. She was merely looking for a way of escaping from the role of full-time housewife, but now she was very pleased with the course of events. She said that her own daughter also wanted to teach.



## Advice to Teaching Students

Following the account of Joanna Digger's method of working given in Chapter II, it would seem that the art teaching student has something important to learn. It is realised that not all artists work in the same way, in fact every approach to the creative process is unique. Nevertheless certain points can be appreciated by taking a specific example:

Joanna Digger for instance needed the following background in order to create her environments:

1. The opportunity to read myths, legends and fairy stories as a child.
2. The opportunity to study science fiction, folklore, religions surrounding folklore, mysterious and occult subjects as she grew up.
3. The time to visit primitive and religious sites such as Avebury and Yorkshire's abbey ruins.
4. The time to discover herself in relation to natural settings such as the forest of Dean. The awareness of the atmosphere of the forest and the significance of the individual tree as a personal symbol.
5. The growth of understanding regarding the relationship of natural material to art.
6. An appreciation of the beauty of inaccessible places arising from pot-holing experiences.
7. The opportunity for the exploration of performance art, linking legend and myth with visual ideas, drama with form.
8. The opportunity for learning the skills related to the actual making of the art object, from experience of working with wood, stones and sand to geometrical construction.

From this development it can be seen that the art teacher needs to allow the student time for daydreaming, reading and talking over a wide range of themes, open-ended situations for personal enrichment and exploration as well as the technical skills related to the execution of the idea. Creative expression emerges from the interplay of a whole sequence of apparently diverse factors. The teaching student should collect examples of the ways in which artists develop. Then later on he will be better equipped to offer free and imaginative situations to his own pupils.



Those wishing to teach should be prepared to take the divergent student in their stride and not clamp down on the unexpected or unusual solution. New ideas in teaching content and method should be regarded as a continuous process of growth for education. The conservative attitude is unlikely to be appropriate with reference to creativity. Sensitivity and intuition are qualities of great importance for the teaching student to develop. Take, for example, the class room situation. Is the same type of class room situation likely to be equally creative for all students? This is very difficult to answer according to the rule of thumb type of logic. This is partly because of the varied kinds of creative approach and the individual ways of manipulating the creative process, also because there are always other factors interacting at the same time. Wherever the variables are great intuition comes into its own. After all the aspects of the problem have been looked at it is necessary to be perceptive to what feels right.



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## CHAPTER IV

### Creativity and the Leisure Student



## The Framework of the Leisure Theme

In order to link the concept of creativity - already discussed - with that of leisure it is necessary to look at the idea of leisure itself. This is by no means a simple, straightforward undertaking. It is soon discovered that it is impossible to isolate 'leisure'. As a concept it is embedded within the endless ramifications of an inter-disciplinary jungle including areas of sociology, psychology, philosophy, education and politics. The subject of leisure is associated with work, class structure, youth culture, women's liberation and ethnic traditions. In all these areas it is also linked with education.

One particularly exciting development is related to the growing awareness of man as active and dynamic. This stems partly from existential philosophy and humanistic psychology. It has many repercussions in practical fields. As stated by J.T. Haworth and M.A. Smith: "Factors such as creativity, spontaneity, curiosity and responsibility are being recognised as important in behaviour. Stimulus response models, portraying behaviour as a simple reaction to stimuli, are increasingly yielding to a broader view, and this is influencing approaches to theory and practice in applied areas, particularly education." 1

All this means that leisure may be seen against the background of human potential. To think about leisure and the future may be to think of the imaginative scope for shaping a world; rather than reacting in a passive way to 'inevitable' social, political or economic factors. The future may be as bright as the brightest ideas that the human mind can grasp. Obviously people cannot achieve everything, but it is better to discover limits as they arise from exploration, rather than to start off by assuming them.



Life patterns for the future may well be very varied indeed. But whatever line or lines individuals follow, it is to be hoped that leisure will be seen - as suggested by R. Glasser and others - as integral rather than residual. <sup>2</sup> The computer and the robot are in the process of transforming the work situation of our society. This progress in science and technology since the mid-fifties may be conveyed by one basic example: Now a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch square chip of silicon may contain over one quarter of a million transistors, a 1957 model would have had just one and a 1963 model about eight. Almost all technological processes will be affected by this. What began with calculators and watches is moving on to automated shopping systems eliminating cash exchanges, to automatic re-ordering of goods and warehouses where only one person will need to know where a lorry load has to go, then the computer will take over, storing and retrieving. In car factories twenty robots could 'man' a production line. In furniture making a person could spray a chair once, the stages of the operation could be recorded by a computer and from then on a robot would be able to perform the task. On farms automated, driverless tractors could plough round the clock. In offices four word processors may make ten typists unnecessary, texts may be stored in memory blocks and filing clerks made redundant, information conveyed via satellite to other countries would affect postal systems, and where a paper record was needed an automatic printer would perform the task. And so one could go on, from automatic teaching machines in the educational field to automatic X-ray machines and even technological help with diagnosis in the medical sphere. The microprocessor can do the job of the giant computer of a few years ago. <sup>3</sup>

Electrical firms may double their output and yet be able to



reduce their work force by 30% in the 1980s. The future suggests automated factories, a handful of software engineers and endless opportunities for innovation. Survival will depend on people finding meaningful lives. The technological Aladin's lamp should lead to people having the time and the mental and physical energy for lifelong or recurring educational experiences and for creative development. (See p.354)

The Work and Leisure Society suggest the 1000 hour working year. As they point out: "If you average more than twenty hours a week in a job that bores or worries you, your health is suffering. Your abilities are deteriorating. You are ageing faster than you should and, according to medical evidence, the chances are that you will die earlier than someone who does not work in such a job." They stress in particular that people should not have to work long hours on dirty, monotonous or dangerous tasks. The Society points out the futility of having some unemployed while others do overtime. They condemn the endless demand for new models and the manufacture of shoddy, throw-away goods leading to unnecessary work. 4

Following these ideas varied working programmes leading to varied leisure arrangements could soon come into practice. For example, some may work three days per week, others may work four and yet others may choose to maintain a forty hour week and take half the year off. In some situations alternating three monthly cycles may be possible. The experiment of two people sharing a job may be another answer. Of course one could suppose that there will always be those whose work, by its very nature, will be freelance; there will be the self-employed and artists with 'work' regarded as a way of life. For these groups the counting of hours is not so essential as for shop, office or factory workers.



If the future is to offer Time, then there is a need to understand the complementary aspects of how to use this free time. On the one hand, there may be said to be a desirability for the cultivation of the cult of idleness: The Chinese have, traditionally, much to teach in this sphere, especially through the Taoist poets and scholars - though it seems unlikely that present day China exactly follows these lines! According to Lin Yutang, the Chinese love of leisure arises from a combination of causes: "It came from a temperament, was erected into a literary cult, and found its justification in a philosophy." 5 ".... This cult of idleness was therefore always bound up with a life of inner calm, a sense of carefree irresponsibility and an intense whole-hearted enjoyment of the life of nature." 6 It has been described as the romantic cult of the idle life, and poets and scholars have given themselves such names as the "Recluse of the Eastern Hillside" or the "Carefree Man of a Misty Lake". The term loafer is often used, but not in the disparaging way associated with the Puritan work ethic of the west. One is reminded of the joyful contemplation of mountains, trees and flowers. To take a personal example: It is delightful to have the relaxing experience of watching a large, furry bee as it enters the snapdragon flowers, to have the time to study its movements as it gathers the pollen, and also to have the peace to actually hear it press down the petals of the flowers.

The other aspect of leisure may be said to be concerned with the more active and expressive approach. It is in the balance, though not necessarily the symmetrical balance, between the two aspects that the student with an interest in creativity will be likely to model his leisure time. The way in which a satisfactory pattern emerges may be intuitive and partly unconscious.



## Creative Experiences for Leisure Students

The following accounts are included:

1. A Bangor Summer School
2. Creativity Week
3. Another Creativity Week
4. A Week-end Course at Holly Royde College
5. Non-Vocational Art Classes
6. The Dartington Conference



**Dartington**



## Sources of Creativity

This was the title of the Bangor Summer School seminar. The Tutor, Dr. Ruth C. Salzberger, stressed how important it is to look critically at the creative process; and to observe what is happening before, during and after the creative act.

She encouraged the group of six students to discuss, explore and experiment. Her approach was to make everyone feel entirely free and not to worry if nothing creative developed, but to observe oneself and try to assess the reasons for the block.

The blocks, to a 'research' orientated group of this kind, may be viewed as of equal interest to the creative products themselves.

The group had been set a choice of pre-seminar essays as follows:

1. Which psychological experiences preceded my writing a poem, painting a picture or composing a song?
2. How do I experience myself during a creative act?
3. Which psychological experiences follow my being creative?

A lively discussion followed the reading of these essays. They provided an interesting initial focus of attention and gave the group the opportunity to gain a hint at least of knowing itself.

During the week the group were asked to consider such questions as:

1. Who am I?
2. What do I want to say?
3. How do I want to say it? Why do I want to say it in this way?
5. What in my life experience has given rise to it?
6. What blocks my creativity?

The first and last questions probably gave the greatest stimulus to the group as topics for consideration.

It was significant that after a certain initial hesitation the group developed in a most dynamic way, reaching a peak of



almost manic excitement by Wednesday. Everyone seemed to be creatively involved, and each person's enthusiasm produced a chain reaction.

It was enjoyable that the group became involved at every level: There was a sharing of ideas at the philosophical and psychological level; there was the sharing of the ferment associated with the chaos and the paradoxes of the creative process; there was a feeling of fellowship and the establishment of social links.

Naturally, there were periods to be alone, working out ideas, then the return to the group to share ideas and reactions.

One member of the group, concerned with self reflection on the theme 'Who am I?', wrote a poem in German entitled 'The Prisoner'. It was later suggested that he should set it to music, so he composed a type of chant. He was able to sing it himself expressing powerful and mystical feeling.

On one occasion the subject of 'Trees' suggested by the Tutor gave rise to prose, poetry and painting.

The blocks to creativity as described by the members of the group included such diverse factors as: authoritarian, rigid and hierarchical situations; critical attitudes; conflicting pressures; lack of stimulus; the weather; feeling tired; time pressures; inhibitions, anxieties and obsessional disturbances.

Sometimes critical attitudes from other people may act in the opposite direction and become a spur. This may be described as the 'I'll show him' reaction.

Some of the blocks to creativity are external and others arise from within. Dr. Salzberger spoke of stimulation in this way. There may be stimulation from outside, such as meeting and love. There may also be stimulation from inside, for example,



memory and the feeling of love or sorrow.

On reflection it appears that much of the internal kind of stimulation is really a delayed and modified external stimulus.

There may be, as Jung suggested, a basic instinct to create. There may be also a wish to contact others.

It was felt by the group that there is much to learn with regard to the nature of creativity and the energy associated with the creative process.

Reference was made to the depth-psychological determinants of creativity. The schizoid, manic-depressive and obsessional personality types could be represented by Einstein, Balzac and Ibsen respectively.

Anthony Storrs says that the manic-depressive and schizophrenic elements in the personality may aid creativity, but if there is a complete breakdown and loss of control through mental illness creativity is hindered. 7

It was interesting to observe some of these personality structures in the group, and to say, partly in fun for the end of the week entertainment: A schizoid is trying to make sense out of an arbitrary and unpredictable universe; and a depressive is trying to replace a world which he feels he has himself destroyed.

The element of humour was continuously breaking out in the group. The humour itself was creative and arose mainly from the nature of the seminar. One member, for example, wrote a poem on the theme of blocked creativity, and then wrote an essay explaining what went wrong with the poem! Flexibility and divergent ways of thinking are regarded as creative characteristics; also the ability to see a wide range of possible solutions to any one problem. It was observed that the group



were capable of spending a whole hour discussing its plans for the following hour.

Other aspects of the subject considered during the week included: emotional involvement; states of heightened imagination; ecstasy and frenzy; the process of being carried away, e.g. Van Gogh; the reasons for creating; the judgement of the product; the risk of expressing something new and the ability to tolerate doubt.

Dr. Salzberger gave a list of the characteristics of the creative person, taken from a variety of sources. Not everyone would accept all the traits as necessarily associated with creativity, the Tutor herself was doubtful about a number of them, but they provided material for discussion.

#### The Characteristics of the Creative Person

The creative person is an achiever, self-assertive, self-sufficient, dominant and aggressive.

Independent, autonomous, constructively critical and dissatisfied.

Less inhibited, less formal and less conventional than the average.

Widely informed, versatile and curious, enthusiastic.

Highly motivated, energetic and persevering.

Open to feeling, feminine, intuitive, empathetic and expressive.

Emotionally unstable but able to use instability to advantage.

Subjective, aesthetic, value-orientated, introverted.

Economically indifferent.

Makes an impact on others because of his clear thinking, wide interests and alertness. \*

\* This summer school was described in the M.Ed. dissertation: "Creative Art Education for Adults", 1976, pp.60-64. It has been included here mainly because it gave rise to the Creativity Weeks.





Ada Wightmore

Sea Dream



An Extract from My Essay for the Seminar

How do I experience myself during a creative act?

My interest as far as painting is concerned lies in the direction of abstraction with a tendency towards surrealism.

The following is a description of how I may feel creating a picture:

One night I crossed to the Isle of Man. The moon was full and I responded by holding certain visually exciting structures of the ship, the waves and the sky in my mind.

The following week I worked on this theme in a painting which I later called 'Sea Dream'. The response was specific to the experience in terms of colour, tone, form and texture; yet it was also personal.

Provided I have a strong visual stimulus, I find this approach very satisfying. I delight in the experimentation with relationships of forms. The problems of balance, harmony, interlocking shapes and re-echoing of rhythms are all absorbing.

There is much in common with writing, in the sense that it is composition that is the significant activity. There is probably even more in common with music, even the terms used to try to describe an abstract painting are really musical ones.

It is interesting to consider the subject of perception. Some people think that everybody sees the same world; but this is by no means the case. Even the initial response is individual and selective. Later selection, distortion and style emphasize this. Perhaps the artist almost sees the world in terms of his own enchanted images.

It is difficult to know at what point the creative transformation, from objective fact to world inside my head, actually takes place. It is this that causes the feeling of exhilaration.





### The Creativity Weeks

The 1977 & 78 Creativity Weeks grew out of the "Sources of Creativity" seminars arranged by Dr R.C. Salzberger at the 1976 Bangor Summer School. Perhaps they demonstrate that it is possible for a group of 7 or 8 people to get together during their holidays or leisure hours and pool their ideas. The most important point is the opportunity for exploration and the value of shared creative experiences.



## The Kaleidoscopic Impact of Creativity Week

1. August 1 - 6 1977      3p.m. Aug. 1st - 2a.m. Aug. 6th

55, Parrs Wood Avenue, Didsbury, Manchester.

An exhibition had been previously arranged. It consisted of over 200 art works, mainly paintings, and meandered through nearly every room of the house. There were around 150 works by my old students, including a few exhibits by psychiatric patients. There were about 60 of my own pictures on show.

The list of titles suggested something of a kaleidoscope: Dance of the Wild Phantoms, Volcanic Eruption, Ritual Fire Dance, Meditation, Heart of Green Paradise, Whirling Sea, Stairway, The Enchanted Journey, Horseman Riding to the Sun, Colour Fantasy, After Sensations of Lights at Night, Vibrating Forms, Scintillating Drama, Cosmic Fire and Volcanic Flower and Everywhere the Glint of Gold.

During the week there were also opportunities to study some relevant books and dissertations. The programme included a display of shells and guided tours of the garden, thus offering stimulation through design in nature themes.

On three evenings there were philosophical discussions linked with creativity. One afternoon Bish planned a discussion in the garden on creativity, the creative process and education. He warned that if the dynamic force is not channelled along creative lines of expression the consequences could be destructive and disastrous. He asked such questions as: How do we teach creativity? By using the creative approach in education should the subject boundaries be abolished? What are the future implications of creativity on societies?

Wednesday evening concluded with a meditation around a candle in the garden. This demonstrated that creativity is not only



about expression, it is also concerned with being - receptivity and awareness.

By Thursday there was felt to be a need to escape to the Ainsdale - Freshfield coast to enjoy the wild flowers, the dunes, salt marshes and sea. During a four hour walk 70 wild plants were recorded in flower, some of these were arranged in a display for Friday. Lynn wrote a short poem about the experience:

"Ainsdale to Freshfield"

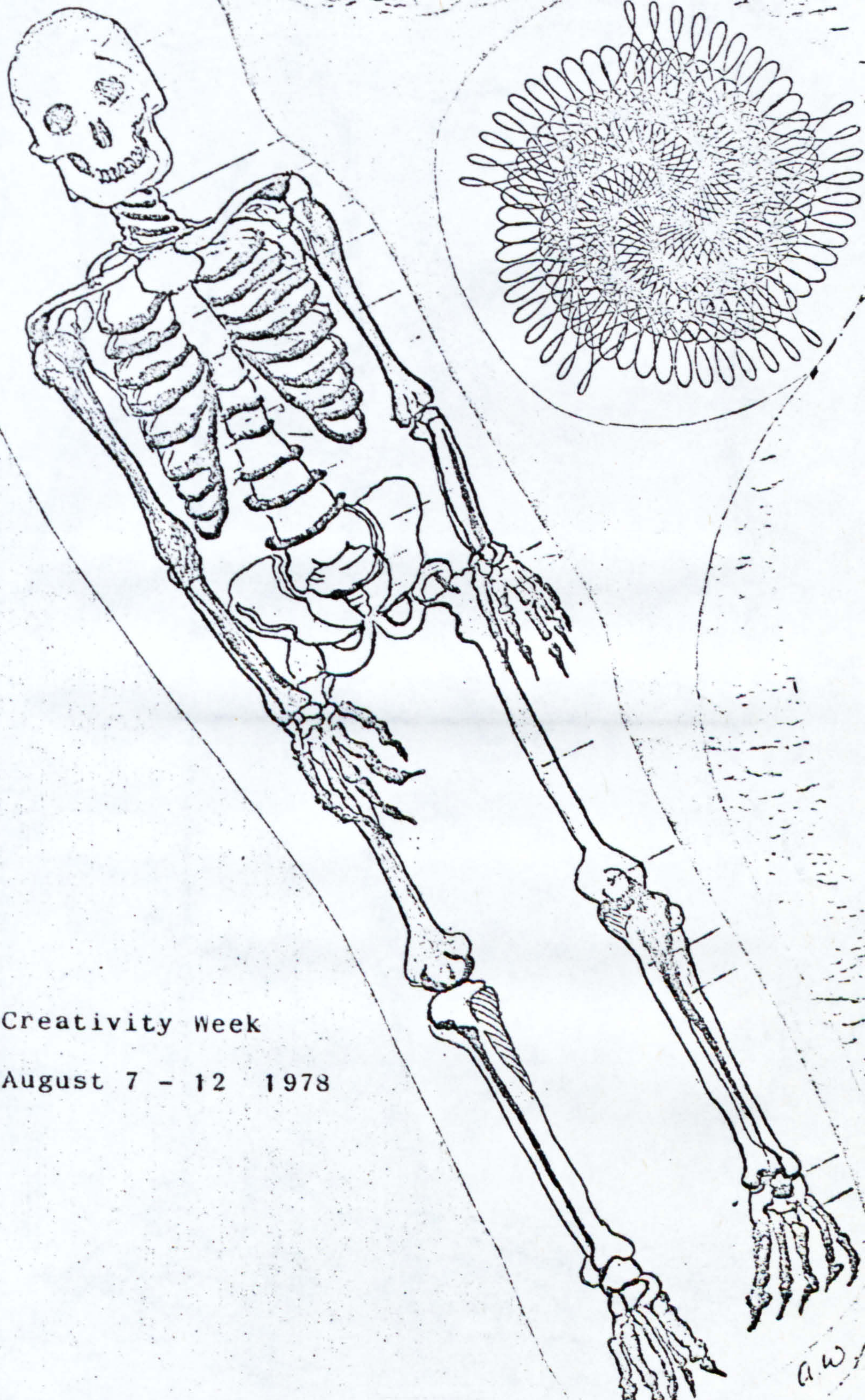
Smoky snakes hurtling towards us,  
A lion in the sky  
No; its just the wind tearing up the sand and the sea  
Elusive bits of rose quartz, agate, amethyst in the grass  
No; its just the wild flowers on the dunes  
A drug in our tea,  
Making us hopelessly ready for wonderful sleep  
No; its just the effect of our 104% day."

On Friday a special tour of the exhibitions was arranged for a party of eight from the Avenue. Friday had been planned as a carnival, with balloons, candles, music and barbecue. But there was also time for continuing discussion and evaluation, and the final topic, around 2a.m., was concerned with chemistry and with the scientific approach to creativity.









Creativity Week

August 7 - 12 1978



Zbigniew Jarzecki



A Tear in Integration 1978



Summer Euphoria Distilled



Creativity Week

2. August 7 - 12 1978      3p.m. Aug. 7th - 4a.m. Aug. 12th

By way of introduction there was a word for everyone to decode and a quiz. This was followed by a topic for discussion:

You Are Here

This is a statement used on town maps and at railway stations. It sounds very simple and uncomplicated, yet on consideration it may lead on to such philosophical problems as the nature of self and consciousness, existence, external reality, space, time and relativity. The statement could be explored in terms of realism, idealism, psychologism, positivism, phenomenism, solipsism, pragmatism and existentialism.

The discussion eventually focussed upon perception and art. It was agreed that if Cubism was concerned with a tangle of unresolved ambiguities, then perhaps this was nearer to the feeling of reality than so-called realistic art.

Reading from "Creativity and the Art Student" was followed by two poems by Bish: "Hierarchical Riddles" and "A Mathematical Metaphysical Riddle". A few lines from this second poem will serve to give a hint of its style and content:

"God and Nature and Man  
are three spheres  
Lodged on a peripheral axis  
of a common cosmic sphere,  
revolving in  
                    triangular  
confrontation,  
justling for the omnipotent key  
to unlock  
the parodies of the Universe...."

The evening was brought to a close with visual stimulation. One room was entitled: "The Shrine of the Red Giantess". There



were paintings, flowers and objects in varying shades through red-purple and crimson to scarlet and orange-red, and there was a surreal red figure extending an invitation to enjoy the life-giving warmth of the red ray. The room, the candles and the lights could be viewed through pieces of coloured film, making it possible for one person to 'see' a vibrant, golden temple and another a deep, ethereal blue grotto at the same time. Tibetan music and incense added to the experience.

On Tuesday Vera read a poem she had composed late the previous night. Lynn suggested that we continued to explore creativity in terms of flexibility of subject areas. She thought, for example, that the "You Are Here" theme could be combined with five paintings that Bish had left behind: The paintings evoked differing moods from the logical and ordered to the spontaneous and free. A feeling expressed in a picture is another way of saying something about the self and its environment in time.

All the pictures were abstracts and inclined to be complex and intriguing. Gradually, individual lists of words emerged to correspond with each painting. Two neighbours arrived part way through and soon became part of the project. Interest seemed to settled on one picture. The group wanted to reach agreement on about 20 words that would convey the mood and structure of this abstraction. However, eliminating words was not easy. Some contradictions appeared, but then the painting itself embraced opposing qualities and personal reactions had to be explained. Finally 12 words were accepted and at that moment John arrived, Lynn strung the words together thus:-

Bright Addis Ababa  
Complement and Tension -  
                    Tone and Hue  
A tear in integration  
A focus shift to jagged calm.



John was asked to say - almost as he walked in - which painting out of the five had given rise to these words. After one minute of silence he chose the right picture.

There followed another 4hrs. of lively discussion, ranging through creative experience to wider issues. Lynn spoke of the importance of tolerance and flexibility and I stressed the need for a series of revolutions in thinking. John, at one point, said "Yes indeed! The whole of society is probably ready for a complete re-structuring." Vera played the Devil's advocate. Sometimes she was reinforcing established patterns and stereotypes and at other times leaping forward with the avant-garde.

Wednesday afternoon was a time for relaxation and mid-week assessment. The evening was devoted to a consideration of art therapy. Carmel was particularly interested in the link between the creative blocks in the so-called psychiatric patient and the signs of insensitivity in the environment. Dr. Salzberger said that art and health could be discussed further at Bangor next summer. Lynn suggested that everyone should keep a creativity diary.

Thursday was once again for the Ainsdale area, leading to a display of exquisite wild flowers.

Friday afternoon was centred around the garden. The evening was arranged by Bish and covered a stimulating range of surprises, sometimes with Chopin, Beethoven or Pink Floyd in the background. The activities included a discussion on the creativity spectrum; a psychology test; reference to Bish's varying types of research projects on chemistry, education, music and art. There were two new poems in the process of creation and a new painting. The painting was of flowers expressing, in an almost psychedelic way, the brilliance of high summer. The evening and the week was concluded at 4a.m. in the morning.



A Residential Course at Holly Royde College - Department of

Extra-Mural Studies

Painting - Methods, Materials and Motivation in the Twentieth Century

February 16-18, 1979

A Selection of Impressions

The Artist as Rebel: The artist asserts independence, to hell with officialdom! The great masterpiece often shocks because it is a rebellion against accepted systems of working. It makes a break with tradition. It causes people to look at the world in a new way. Art is concerned with a vision beyond mere survival. The cubists presented a challenge to our way of seeing the world and to our way of thinking about reality. The surrealists sought their inspiration in the mental landscape, in dreams, mystery, atmosphere, primitive forces, isolation, the process of change, and in the unexpected. The styles and techniques of the sixties and seventies offer many variations on experimental themes, from developments of assemblage, happenings, pop art and neo-realism to hard edge, minimal art and mathematical progressions. There is the interest in art in relation to the environment: large scale colour paintings encourage entry and involvement with a whole realm of colour; many works openly invite participation; landscape art may offer areas for meditation.

The practical work, sandwiched between the illustrated discussions, provided the opportunity for expression in terms of 20th Century styles and techniques such as collage with the possibility of surrealistic qualities, frottage, informal printing, colour relationships and textural exploration. Some interesting collages emerged. There were compositions of paper circles and rectangles, one of towelling and other fabrics with paint applied and one of eastern temples with impossible reflections.



There was a three dimensional work with a half cone and a number of extending tubes like paper telescopes. Some of the collages arose from titles in the colour supplements: "If only we could see through" and "Well they said anything could happen". In most of this art the element of unpredictability was encouraged and enjoyed.

In an art course of this kind there is an interweaving of the expressive and appreciative aspects. Observing, with the help of slides, the strange space of G. De Chirico, the haunting feeling of Tanguy, the subtle colour sensitivity of Morris Louis or the bizarre effects of Alberto Burri; it is possible for students to be stimulated to make their own personal statements. Such efforts may then increase awareness of a whole range of creative and adventurous qualities in the art of the century. During one of the discussions that developed from the viewing of the slides the subject of communication arose. The lecturers tended to think that if an artist ventures too far into his own world his art may become remote and incommunicable. But the artist at the white heat of inspiration cannot always give attention to making communication easy, or even think about it at all. They had said previously that the great masterpiece often shocks. The highly original artist may have a message for the future.

(There were two tutors and eleven students on this course.)



## A Problem Relating to Certain Non-Vocational Art Classes

As a result of visiting a number of non-vocational adult art and related studies classes over the past fifteen years, one negative feature is apparent in perhaps ten out of twenty of them; namely, the copying of paintings from calendars, post-cards and prints. This tendency is most marked in afternoon classes as compared with evening ones. It may be partly on account of the larger number of retired people in the former groups; although it is undesirable to generalise too much regarding the age factor. Certainly some of the students obtain great benefit from the social aspect of the classes and from the pleasure they find in working on very detailed paintings. It just seems a pity that they are missing out on the inspirational and personal reaction aspect of their hobby. It hardly seems fair to single out any one particular class for criticisms of this kind. The following comments are therefore selected from visits to a number of different classes.

### Statements made by Students engaged in Copying from Pictures

1. I don't believe in abstract art. It may sound dogmatic but I could never be convinced. Its just rubbish!
2. I would like to paint my own picture but I am afraid that it would turn out a disaster. Perhaps I might try a view through the window at home.
3. I never seem to see anything in my surroundings that I want to paint. Perhaps when I go to Wales I will have a try.
4. I always copy in class. Sometimes I do a sketch of a landscape in pencil that is my own work, but I don't often develop paintings from my own ideas.
5. I was taught art in the 1920s. Then I turned to office work to earn a living and now that I am retired I have turned to art.



I was trained mainly in a traditional way and I would find it very difficult to break free. I often use photographs as the basis for my paintings.

Students of this type seem to be unaware of art as an adventure. They take a pride in the careful painting of every brick in a wall, or else they follow a particular well-established style of painting such as impressionism. It seems especially sad when they echo the work of painters such as Monet or Van Gogh who were themselves such exciting artistic rebels.

The teachers of these classes must carry some of the blame, although their problems are often understandable. If only they could free their students from their fear of making a mess by encouraging them to have a wild time with paint or other materials. Some have tried many times and then become resigned. Some are afraid of losing their classes if numbers sink too low, so they follow popular demand. Others actually believe that copying is a useful way to learn. They cannot see that anything can be done about it if a student in say Manchester wants to paint mountains. They are always using towns and winter as an excuse. Teachers who really find this kind of situation unsatisfactory should avoid advertising classes that will attract the copying brigade. They should, for example, use such titles as "Modern, Experimental Approaches in Painting" in order to appeal to a different type of clientele. It has to be made clear that if a teacher wishes to encourage creative expression he cannot be expected to offer a formula.



### A Collage of Adult Education Student

A. Thomas may be taken as an example of a retired person making a creative use of her abundant leisure time. During 1973-74, for example, she attended adult classes concerned with abstract and fantastic art and with flower painting; and she never seemed to miss any lectures from a series of twenty-four on "Primitive and Ancient Art" and "The Development of Modern Art". She described her working life in part cynical and part humorous terms as that of an industrial slave. Her new found freedom was like a spring in autumn kind of experience.

At first she had not expected to become interested in the abstract type of art, but she soon produced well balanced paintings based on squares and rectangles and ingenious collages. She developed a feeling for the slightly surrealistic approach with something of the fairy-tale quality. On one occasion she painted a tree with its own shadow rising up, branches becoming arms, spaces eyes and twigs hair. It was called "Help!!" and one was left with the uncertain reaction as to whether it was the tree or its animated shadow that was upset. At another time Ms Thomas made sketches of iguanas and snakes at the 'live' section of the museum and then later produced the "Valse Iguana" as shown.





## Introduction to the Dartington Conference, 1979

"The Dartington Conference, now in its fourth year, was set up to explore new ideas and experiences at the growing edge of knowledge and relate these to education. By introducing speakers and workshop leaders from a wide variety of related fields, the Conference aims to be of interest not only to specialists, but to all those concerned with growth of consciousness.

It is becoming increasingly clear that we live in a time of fundamental transition, not only in terms of life-style and values, but also in our modes of conceiving and apprehending reality. The hopes and aspirations that lay behind the rational and industrial concept of progress have generated a new set of problems and challenges for humanity. There is a growing feeling that our model of the universe has outlived its usefulness and that we are groping towards a new world-view which reflects a greater balance between the spiritual and material, the intellectual and non-rational, the feminine and masculine, quality and quantity, equilibrium and growth, meaning and knowledge. We are seeking patterns that connect, rather than abstract categories which dissect.

With this in mind, and in the belief that education is concerned with the development of consciousness as a whole, this year's Conference sets out to explore the nature of and relationship between those modes of knowing and understanding that we associate with thought, feeling and intuition."

(From the Programme)





## New Themes for Education

### Thought, Feeling and Intuition

The Dartington Conference, 17 - 22 April 1979 (See p.368)

#### An Example of a Creative Experience:

Ronald Higgins spoke on the subject of "A Global Perspective - Our Consciousness of the World Crisis." He outlined the world's problems as relating to the population explosion, malnutrition and starvation, resource shortage, the environmental question, the nuclear threat and the leaping of science and technology beyond human control. He said that apathy was the Seventh Enemy, the Human Factor in the Global Crisis. In the second part of the lecture he suggested the need for a visionary type of awareness, a new science integrating the two modes of knowing, the value of an emphasis on the feminine side to balance sterile logic and the importance of the awakening of the spiritual dimension. He concluded with a reference to our present position as being at the razor's edge of danger.

Peter Russell spoke on the "Brain and Learning Methods." He referred to the associations of the left hemisphere with language, words, speech, writing, logic and analysis and those of the right brain with the spatial, visual, emotional and with synthetic processes. He said that creativity may be thought of as partly a right brain activity and perhaps also a matter for the whole brain. The lecture stressed the importance of a balanced development. Education had been too concerned with the left brain and radical changes were needed in the curriculum. Where schools had cut down the time spent on such matters as arithmetic and spelling by half, the results not only showed the benefit of more opportunity for right brain activities, but also an improvement in the arithmetical and verbal skills themselves.



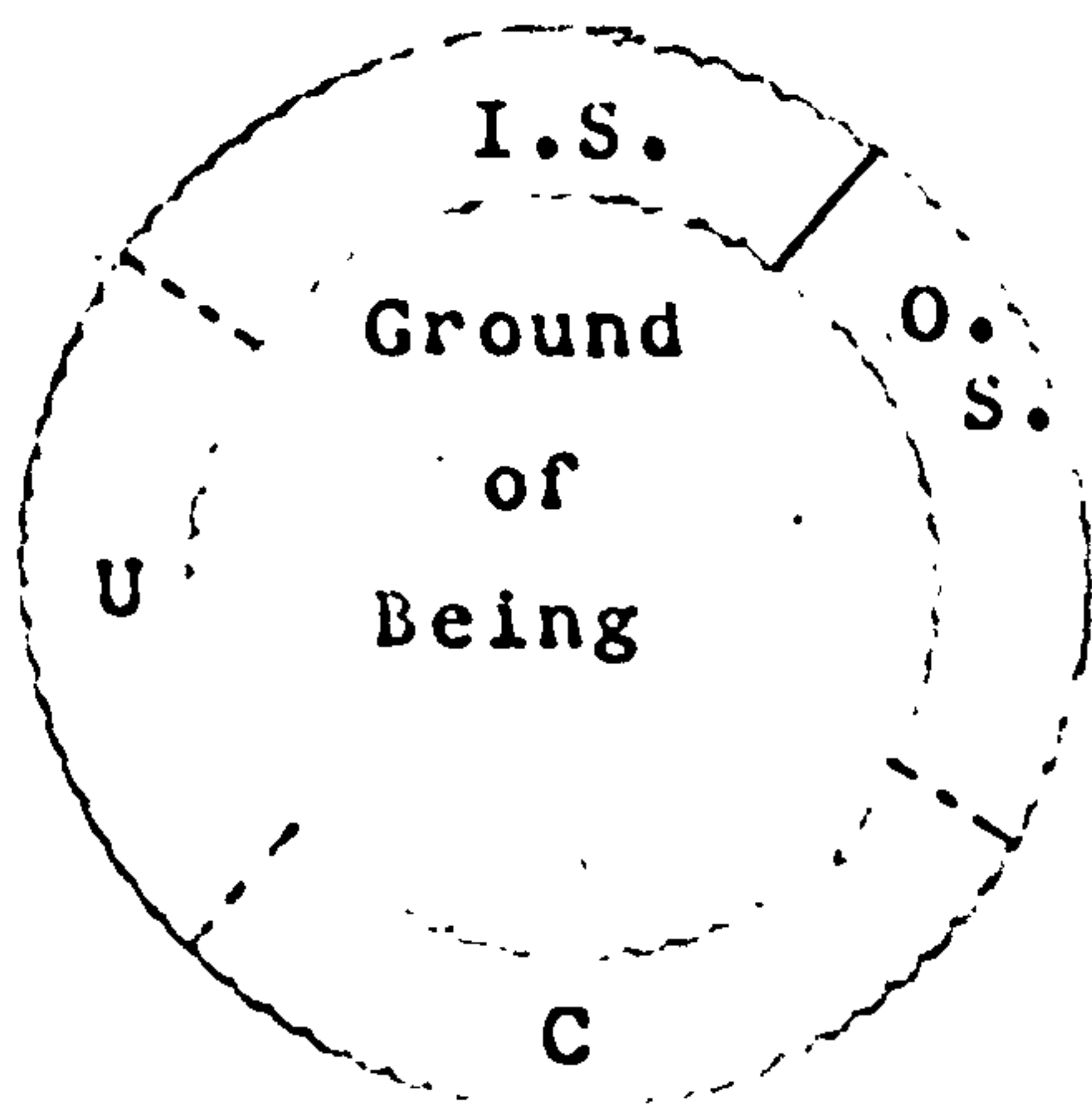
Perhaps the traditional schools tend to choke and smother the brain, or perhaps they do not allow the full scope for the fibres connecting the two halves of the brain. Russell said that meditation had been found very helpful with regard to this opening up of the whole brain. On the subject of the female brain, he said that women's brains tended to be more sensitive and more diffused. The subject of the human brain gave rise to 500,000 research papers per year and the lecture conveyed something of the wonder of this object that looked like a large crinkled walnut.

Claude Curling spoke on "Physics and Consciousness". He began with the development of physics: Newton had linked the celestial and the terrestrial; Maxwell had linked the electrical and the magnetic with light waves; Einstein had linked the electro-magnetic with mechanics, and linking gravity with these he had linked all with space and time. It was as if an aesthetic process of unification had been going on making unity and geometry the core of physics. But things were moving fast and it was n't long before Curling was plunging into the smashed geometry of the black hole; whirling through concepts of mass, spin and charge into multiple universes and on to the crisis in physics itself. With a less imaginative scientist one might have expected the crisis to be defined in physical terms. But Curling approached the threshold of what may best be described as the black hole of the soul, the realms of inner space. He said that the road was closed, but perhaps it could be opened by love. At this point the lecture became occult and reference was made to the strange parallels between mystics and physicists. This was really the 'Tao of Physics'. In the brain lecture the bridge between the two halves had been shown to be significant. Now we were to seek bridges between consciousness and outer space and the unconscious and

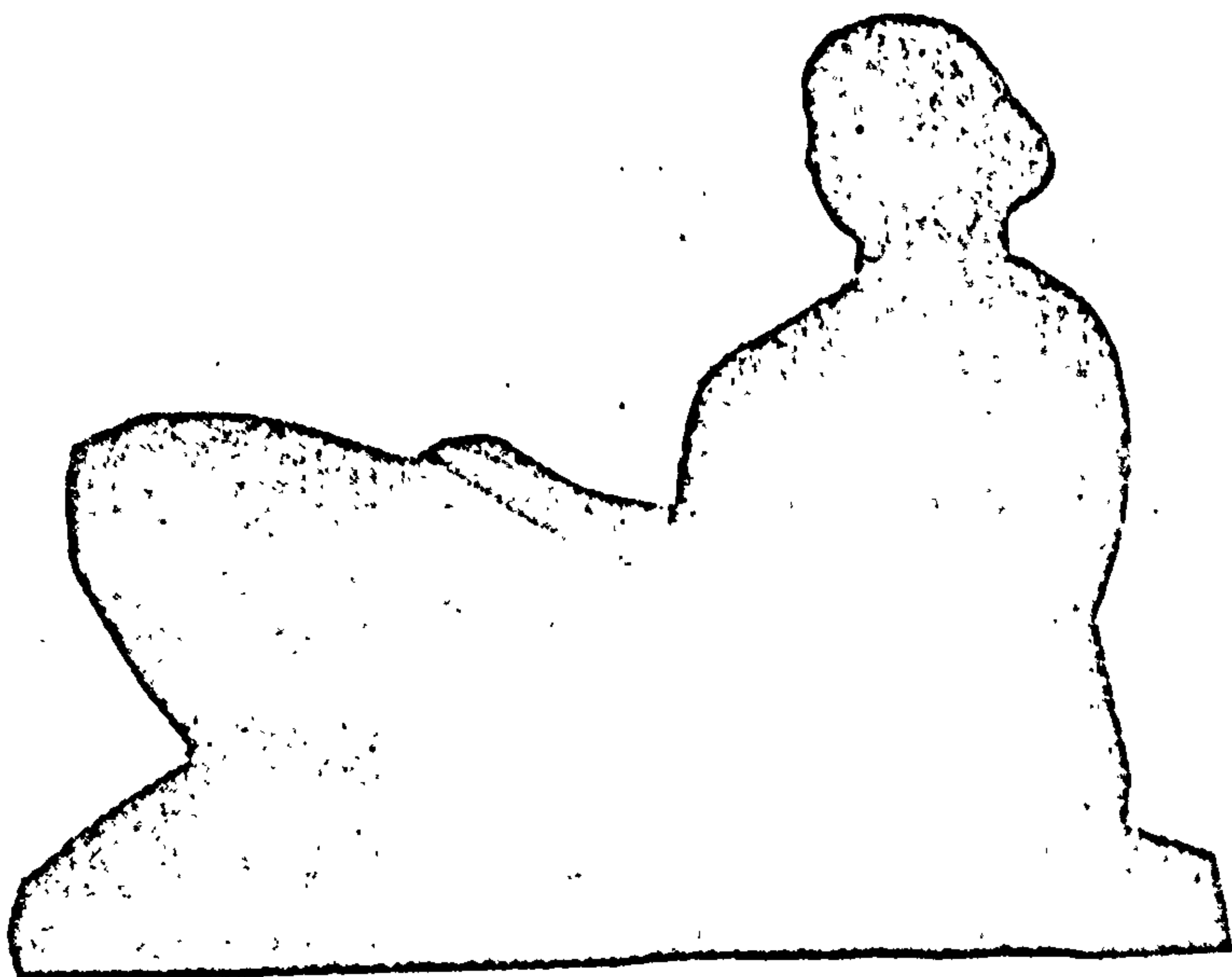


inner space. Perhaps the archetypes were part of our shared inner space, but we would have to make our own maps. Getting in touch with where physics is going led to references to dreams, altered states of consciousness and cosmic art.

In his workshops throughout the conference Curling had a display of visual as well as scientific material. Participants were asked to produce a map, a picture and an idea. At each session he aimed to take someone on a journey into inner space and also demonstrated the biofeedback apparatus. It was of interest to note that this scientist from the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Kings College London, was going to speak at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in relation to their exhibition of "The Art of the Invisible" - The Spiritual in Art - the Art of the Spiritual. In this exhibition artists such as Kandinsky and Mondrian are represented on account of influences from theosophy in their art. It was of interest also to note that Curling, in his inner space experiments, seemed to have a preference for left-handed - and particularly brain-changed - women. He even observed that the figure on the conference programme was of the Dartington sculpture by Henry Moore, and this was of an apparently left-handed woman. All this kind of emphasis seemed to suggest an attraction for the the surprising, unexpected, unusual and intuitive.



(See pp.14&15 & 25-28.)





Turning now to some of the other contributors to the conference: A sturdy log house on a northern New England hill top is the physical location of the Hill Centre for Psycho-synthesis in Education, as well as being the home of Tara Stuart. Apart from her lecture: "At the Centre Stands the Self", Tara conducted a number of workshops. On these occasions participants were encouraged to discover the self as a centre of pure consciousness, a power house of will and love and creative imagination. Encouragement was given to the groups to make symbolic pictures of growth and the urge towards fulfilment.

Diana Halliday offered spontaneous, non-directive painting and modelling in her workshops. There was the opportunity for people in general - as distinct from psychiatric patients - to discover the value of art therapy.

Brian Helweg-Larsen conducted workshops on Learning Methods.

"Although Western Education is frequently criticised for being too intellectually orientated, neither our skills nor the ability to direct our own learning are usually developed to anything like the extent possible. By constantly setting tasks and failing to teach students how to learn; and by putting virtually all learning into a competitive failure orientated setting, freedom of thought and freedom to enquire are strangled."

The workshops explored the freeing of the learning process. There was encouragement to take notes using flow pattern diagrams with coloured pens, rather than according to the linear method.

Don Wilde conducted fascinating workshops demonstrating the biofeedback machines such as the Electrical Skin Resistance Meter and the Mind Mirror. The former being used by everyone in the group to monitor the autonomic nervous system: response to activity such as breathing hard or talking, and conversely to being still and meditating. One individual was wired to the Mind Mirror and wave patterns during meditation could be observed and later discussed. Don was particularly interested in altered states of



consciousness as in dreaming, meditation and creative experiences. He said that in meditation, following the journey inwards, if a problem is found to be circling around so also will often be its solution circling nearby. (See p.15.)

Before one of the lectures, Maurice Ash, the Chairman of Dartington Hall Trust, had a few words to say: He spoke of the hidden theme of the conference and of Tagore's dream of an ashram being established at Dartington. There was interest in the three-fold stress of Head, Heart and Hand. Dartington believed very much in research, but it had not itself been researched. Perhaps the right questions could never have been formulated. Knowledge now seemed to be in danger of disappearing down its own black holes: There were signs of crisis in the physical sciences, crisis in the social sciences, likewise in the arts and possibly in epistemology also.

However, two very optimistic talks were given on "Evolution" with one of the workshops: Firstly, Peter Russell spoke of the process in terms of void, energy, matter, life and consciousness. He described a series of accelerations building up towards the curve of the growth of consciousness by the end of the century. In an attempt to convey the levels of total awareness and lucid and compassionate concern that he foresaw in the future he used three expressions - paradigm shift, meta-consciousness and global brain. Secondly, Guy Dauncey spoke with an energy filled with hope and vision. (It was interesting to note that this young participant was unemployed, except that he was writing a handbook on unemployment!) Guy saw consciousness as fundamental. He dismissed the political parties as being too masculine. He outlined the need for the New Age ideas, for consciousness changes, radical changes in structures and the elimination of all barriers.





Cecil Collins

The Sleeping Fool 1943

Oil on canvas

Tate Gallery



Guy had made himself responsible for the production of a delightful bimonthly journal called "Interchange". In the Oct. 1978 issue he stated: "Without substantial transformations in the world around us, inner change remains but fragile. We have to remould the world so as to express what we are becoming." 8

Three films were shown during the conference: "The Experienter" by Michael Kohler and Brian Helweg-Larsen took 135 minutes. It explored Earth, Water, Air and Fire in relation to Body, Emotion, Mind and Spirit. The film used mime, rhythm and colour to map out the state of our collective unconscious and unlock the potential for healing. It followed a young man on his long journey for understanding and harmony; a psychological experience through the inner self - with a camera. It also represented a kind of cinematic Zen riddle to which the viewer may find his own answer. The second film, called "Oisín" related to the glorious wild sounds and sights across mountain, forest, lake and sea - Ireland's contribution to the conservation theme. The third film was called "The Eye of the Heart - The Paintings of Cecil Collins".

In this film the artist was shown in the process of painting and also with his students at the Central School of Art and at the City Lit. Centre for Adult Studies, London. Cecil Collins stressed the metaphysical aspect. He said that life was a mystery and in a strange way we were expected to participate and contribute to the mystery. He said that there was a need to let art transform the consciousness. Much of his work was symbolic and related to ancient universal symbols such as the pilgrim, fool, prophetess and angel. Collins said that if we lose touch with the archetypes we will become imprisoned in their echoes, leading to fragmentation and madness. He expressed the view that we are at the beginning of a new age - the new art faces the rising sun. .



A Concluding Optimistic Quotation for the Future

".... I've also got faith not only in my belief as a socialist but a tremendous belief in human beings, and I know that we can produce a society where man will cease to simply go to work and have a little leisure, but will release his latent talent and ability and begin to produce in the cultural sense all the things that I know he's capable of: music, poetry, writing, sculpture, whole works of art that, at the moment, are literally lying dormant simply because we, as a society, are not able to tap it." 9 This statement was not made by a writer or artist, but by the leader of the Yorkshire miners, Arthur Scargill.



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## CHAPTER V

### The Theoretical Background of Art Therapy



## Introduction

This chapter provides a brief account of the historical background of psychiatric art; recent developments and reference to alienation and universal and personal symbolism. The subject of schizophrenic art is considered, including its characteristic features, artistic and schizophrenic experience and the psychological problems of schizophrenia. Two very different artists, Van Gogh and Adolf Wölfli, both of interest in the psychiatric context, are also discussed. The concluding section refers to manic-depressive psychosis.



## The Historical Background of Psychiatric Art

One of the first psychiatrists to be concerned with the subject in this country was Forbes Winslow. In 1849 he wrote "Insanity of Men of Genius". In 1880 he referred to three volumes containing specimens of artistic productions by various patients in an un-named English Asylum. This collection, one of the earliest mentioned in the literature, was made by the Medical Superintendent. It contained works in pencil, ink, water colours, chalk, sepia and oil, covering a period of 20 years. <sup>1</sup>

Max Simon, the French psychiatrist, was one of the first to describe the characteristics of drawings by mental patients. In 1876 he noted that patients suffering from delusions of persecution made elaborately executed and symbolic drawings of their delusions. Simon emphasized the diagnostic value of creative work. <sup>2</sup>

In Italy the most outstanding early work in the field was done by Lombroso. He arranged exhibitions of paintings at the Museum of Psychiatry and Criminal Anthropology of the University of Turin. In 1880 he reported data on a group of 108 mental patients with artistic tendencies.

In his book "Man of Genius" he considered the pathological condition of a number of famous men, and elaborated upon the relationship between genius and insanity. He maintained that there was a link between extreme forms of creativity and psychopathology. Be that as it may, Lombroso made some shrewd observations with regard to the nature of genius: "The coincidence of genius and insanity enables us to understand the astonishing unconsciousness, instantaneousness, and intermittance of creations of genius..."

He wrote of genius as characterized by irresistible impulsion



and of the domination of genius by the unconscious. He wrote of heightened sensitivity in a way similar to the psychologists of the present time and said of geniuses: "They feel and notice more things and with greater vivacity and tenacity than other men, their recollections are richer, and their mental combinations more fruitful." 3

In 1900 T.B. Hyslop exhibited a collection of about 600 works done by the patients at Bethlem Hospital. In the 1920's he wrote of the work of mental patients in relation to various schools and to modern art. In "The Great Abnormals" he wrote: The great war of the future will be that of self-realization, with its consequent freedom from artificial bonds of slavery in which each individual has become so enmeshed that he no longer is free to think, feel, or act for himself." 4

Here again there is a modern flavour, this time in the tolerance and enjoyment of nonconformity.

In Germany there have been many contributors: In 1906 F. Mohr observed that particular drawing characteristics serve to differentiate the various forms of mental illness. He used a systematic experimental approach to the subject.

H. Prinzhorn has been described as a monumental figure in the history of this research. In an article in 1919, he described the newly formed Museum of the Insane at the Heidelberg Psychiatric Clinic, which at that time contained 127 cases. His brilliant classic: "The pictorial works of a mental patient, a contribution to the psychology and psychopathology of the Gestaltung" was published in 1922. The book contains 187 illustrations and covers diagnosis, genius, the characteristics of the art from the Heidelberg Collection and comparative studies. 5 (See pp.216 & 217 & Chapter VI, p.264.)



In 1925 W. Weygandt noted four main connections between art and mental illness:- 1. Mental illness extinguishes art. 2. Mental illness may facilitate a dormant talent. 3. Mental illness alters the style and content of art. 4. Mental illness may not affect art.

Lunge-Eichbaum considered various groups in the following way: Those geniuses who were psychotic, but only after their work was completed, e.g. Faraday. Those in whom the psychosis existed before their work began, and influenced it, but the formative talent remained intact, e.g. De Quincey. Those who did their creative work in the midst of the psychosis, e.g. Monet. He also wrote of the psychopaths, e.g. Beethoven, and said that their condition sensitized them to factors not sensible to others - fluidity of ideas and a talent for new combinations.<sup>6</sup>

In Switzerland C.G. Jung pioneered the work, using painting as part of the treatment for his patients.<sup>7</sup>

In 1921 W. Morgenthaler produced the first monograph devoted to a schizophrenic artist - Adolf Wölfli 1864-1930.<sup>8</sup>

In Russia extensive early work was done by P.I. Karpov. In 1926 he wrote: "The Creative Activity of the Insane and Its Influence on the Development of Science, the Arts and Technics". Karpov collected thousands of specimens from many institutions over a period of 15 years.<sup>9</sup>

In America, towards the end of the 19th century, a number of psychiatrists became interested in psychiatric art. In several New York institutions drawing, music, dancing, drama, singing, embroidery, woodwork and writing were all reported on.

In 1920 E.J. Kempf wrote "Psychopathology" and collected drawings from the St. Elizabeth Hospital, Washington.<sup>10</sup>

Bender and Schilder, working at the Belle Vue Hospital,



New York, have published a number of studies on the art of the patients. 11

A.C. Jacobson, writing between 1909 & 1926 on the subject says: "The genius is usually, if not always, of insane temperament, but his creative work reflects the man at his best, that is to say, sanest." 12

"A Survey of the Literature on Artistic Behavior in the Abnormal" by Anne Anastasi and John P. Foley, Jr. was published in four parts in 1940 & 41: "Historical and Theoretical Background; Approaches and Interrelationships; Spontaneous Productions; and Experimental Investigations." This was part of a project conducted by the writers under the auspices of the Columbia University Council for Research in the Social Sciences.

In II "Approaches and Interrelationships", the authors take three main approaches: (a) The artistic approach in which the art is viewed aesthetically. (b) The psychiatric approach, in which the art is used for psychotherapy and diagnosis. (c) The psychological approach, in which there is an attempt to understand the factors involved in artistic productions. 13

In 1943 Anastasi and Foley published "An Analysis of Spontaneous Artistic Productions by the Abnormal". Of the 295 Institutions which were circularized, 139 responded. Of these, 19 indicated that for various reasons they did not find themselves able to co-operate; 58 reported no data were available since no patient at the time was drawing spontaneously; and 62 hospitals, distributed over 30 States, submitted data on a total of 212 patients.

The writers were able to examine directly 1,203 products by 188 of these patients. The work was studied with reference to medium, subject matter, technique and execution, colour and



brightness, and special characteristics. 14

In 1944 Anastasi and Foley published "An Experimental Study of Adult Psychotics in comparison with that of a Normal Control Group." 15

The writers say : "Drawings by psychotics have been explored from a variety of viewpoints: as artistic products, as psychiatric devices for diagnosis and therapy, and as sources of psychological information on the nature of such processes as perception, thinking, imagination and aesthetic behavior."

In this experiment 340 patients from 5 mental hospitals were matched in age, marital status, educational and occupational level, artistic training and experience, and geographical distribution, with 340 normal adults.

All these 680 adults were asked to draw four subjects under controlled conditions: Free Choice, A Man, Danger and A Copy of a Floral Design. Afterwards the drawings were analysed.

Some interesting observations were made: A greater percentage of the abnormal produced fantastic compositions and unrelated objects. The range of subject matter was greater in the abnormal. The deliberate destruction of the drawing occurred more often with the patients; and a few of them showed resistance as the task became more specific, and even refused to draw.

However, it was concluded that absence of certain bizarre characteristics cannot be taken as proof of normality; nor can any special peculiarity provide conclusive evidence of abnormality.

Returning to this country, in 1937 Guttman and MacLay produced a report based on the study of the drawings of five schizophrenic patients. 16

In 1938 an exhibition was held in London of over 50 drawings made by the former Russian ballet dancer, Nijinsky, while he was



in a Swiss Sanatorium.

H.G. Haynes embarked on a research into the unconscious from schizophrenic dreams and drawings entitled "The Mythology of the Soul". This work was started in 1940, and developed further in 1955. It covers over 900 pages, and is mainly devoted to the study, along Jungian lines, of two borderline schizophrenics. The reason for the investigation arose because he could not understand the art produced by these patients. 17

In 1945 Adrian Hill wrote "art Versus Illness" and in 1951 "Painting Out Illness". As a result of his work in Sanatoria, he discovered that a patient may be cured of a physical disease, but develop mental illness as a result of long periods in a hospital. He found that art was an important way of combating institutional neurosis. 18

In 1950 Francis Reitman wrote "Psychotic Art" and in 1954 "Insanity, Art and Culture". He was interested to know how far cultural differences are expressed in mental illness, and what the standards are for judging abnormality in a given culture. Reitman studied the work of mental patients sent from New Zealand, Mexico, East Africa, Egypt, India and Japan. He received about 200 pictures from 50 non-western patients. 19

E.C. Dax produced "Experimental Studies in Psychiatric Art" in 1953. He was the Medical Superintendent at Netherne Hospital, Surrey, before going out to be the Chairman of the Mental Hygiene Authority, Victoria, Australia. His book is an inquiry into the value of the arts in psychological medicine. 20

Dax considered that two main avenues had been opened for further investigation: What are the effects of art on illness? and: What are the effects of illness on art?

Dax made a study of 20,000 pictures at Netherne and arranged



a series of experimental studies. He tended to be against the use of the term art therapy, as he felt that although creative activity may be a useful aid to psychiatric treatment, this was a subjective view and not statistically supported.

However, he admitted that with regard to the effect of art on mental illness statistical evidence would be difficult to obtain, for in the field of psychological medicine, the clinical problems are so individual.

He would have liked some scientific evidence to show that a group of patients having art improved more quickly and in greater numbers than a control group. Nevertheless, he did study the ways in which art may be helpful to patients.

Dax observed that paintings may reflect mental illness closely. The objective study of the effect of mental illness on art is also difficult because aesthetic criteria are not easy to establish.

However, Dax studied paintings from the point of view of mood disturbance in the affective psychoses and disorders of thought in schizophrenia. He also studied embroidery and observed, in psychotic patients, many of the same features in this work as in the paintings. He was interested in the way patients handled different materials in modelling and the influence of mental illness on imagination as distinct from craftsmanship.

In the 1940's mental hospitals began unlocking the wards. Gradually, as the patients were emancipated the psychiatrists found amazing changes in them. The sullen and the violent often acquired a new sense of purpose. They wanted social activities and recreation. Educational programmes could be planned for them, and at the same time they needed less attention in the old custodian sense.



Recent developments - mainly from the mid 1950's to the present time.

In 1956 "L'art psychopathologique" by R. Volmat was published. It is a profusely illustrated work, it analyses the productions of 320 mental patients. It is based on documentation from the International Exhibition of Psychopathological Art, held on the occasion of the 1st World Congress of Psychiatry in Paris, 1950.<sup>21</sup>

Dr. Georg Schmidt, as Director of the Kunstmuseum, Basle and Professor at the Munich Academy of Fine Art; Dr. Hans Steck, Professor of Psychiatry at Lausanne University and Dr. A. Bader, a specialist in psychiatric medicine and Physician at Sainte-Croix, have all contributed to the subject, and also to the book "Though This be Madness". In this publication the work of three psychotic artists is considered from the aesthetic angle.<sup>22</sup>

Bader sees in the pictorial work of psychotics a mirror of the human soul. He says: "The schizophrenic reproduces not what he sees around him but what exists inside him". In this respect he is not unlike many modern artists. Bader speaks of creation becoming an act of liberation: "Fear is quelled and the work created takes on magic qualities".

Steck also refers to magical processes restoring inner unity in a patient.

In Holland whole hospitals are now going over to cultural therapy and Professor J.H. Plokker is a leading figure in the research in this field. His special interest revolves around the "shattered image of schizophrenics".<sup>23</sup>

Many of the imaginative paintings done by patients represent this inner conflict. One picture may, perhaps, show a tilted window, because the patient says she sees the world from a different angle compared with other people. There may be a



flight of steps with the upper ones sloping, icy and impossible to climb. A tiny figure on the edge of a huge vertical cliff, and variations on this theme, are very common.

The schizophrenic nightmare may be vividly represented as a network of black lines enclosing a figure; or the extreme loneliness of the one isolated figure in a deserted or hostile world. The feeling, typical of the paranoid schizophrenic, of being attacked on all sides, may be depicted as a furious battle of figures on horseback, surrounding and closing in on the one central figure. There may be a wall of a large house with every window barricaded up with intricate brickwork, or a castle as a distant goal with the route blocked by endless obstacles.

A. Weatherson, who was the Art Therapist at Springfield Hospital, London, gives a vivid account of the paranoid state: "The paranoid state can be seen so clearly in some kinds of paintings that the haunted and constantly watched sensations of the victim can be most easily appreciated. A setting sun over a darkened landscape gradually takes on the characteristics of an eye - the fence in the foreground of the picture becomes a row of teeth and slowly a monstrous face emerges, each part of the picture becoming absorbed. Whatever the original point of departure of such pieces, these faces appear, looming through what the patient has tried to express."

Even harmless photographs 'copied' by paranoid patients may take on a menacing appearance, it is therefore understandable that real people should seem threatening to them under the most apparently innocent situations.

The strange, bizarre quality of much psychotic art has also interested Professor Carstairs. He cites the manic-depressive experiences of Piranesi, as expressed in the etchings of gigantic



From 'The Frontiers of  
madness', Part 2, by G.M. Carstairs  
Observer, 1966



194a

W. Kurelek



*A patient's view of the psychiatrists. This man depicts himself as a test-tube specimen, and shows Prof. Carstairs, who writes the article, as the fourth face up, on the left.*



imaginary prisons, spiral staircases leading nowhere and a sense of human futility. Goya's furious energy, alternated with fits of black despair, and his pictures of cannibal witches and all manner of monsters.

Professor Carstairs has had the disconcerting experience of seeing himself depicted in a picture by a patient: He is shown, along with a host of other psychiatrists, gazing in profound bewilderment at the patient, a specimen in a test-tube.

The same patient has also painted "The Maze", in which his skull is cut open to reveal the compartments of obsessive horror that summarised his life. 24

In 1965 there was an exhibition of paintings at the Edinburgh Festival. They were selected from over 3,000 patient-art-productions and hung alongside world masterpieces.

A booklet relating to the exhibition has been produced entitled "Expressionism Through Illness". The co-authors were Joyce H. Laing, a professional artist and the Art Therapist at the Ross Clinic, Aberdeen and Alex. N. Main, a psychologist who has carried out research on the diagnosis of schizophrenia by means of paintings.

The exhibition summarised six years of work in the Aberdeen hospitals. The term 'Expressionism' was chosen because this art style is concerned with the expression of feeling. There was felt to be an affinity between this style and patient-art.

Joyce Laing says: "For the artist, the critic and the connoisseur the knowledge of patient-art must excite many questions on the basic values of much professional art and at the same time stimulate interest by the remarkable directness of its emotional content."

Alex. Main was interested in such questions as: "What colours,



shapes, etc., convey which emotions? How do these patterns of response change or modify with different illnesses? Do we get more consistent appraisals of these emotions in normal paintings or those of the ill person? Does the originality of vision or the skill of the artist change his expression in any way, and if so, in what way?" 25

The Aberdeen Collection is housed in the Ross Clinic.

In 1961 & 62 two films were produced by the Departments of Mental Health and Medical Photography, Aberdeen University. They show something of the work at the Ross Clinic. 26

The 1961 Film, Art in Psychiatry, shows the patients in the studio. The atmosphere is one of informality. All the patients admitted to the Unit are asked to draw or paint. There is a complete choice of media, though gouache colour is recommended. No instruction is given in technique and the patients are encouraged to work spontaneously. The visual record provided by the pictures and sculpture may be used like a graph to indicate the trend of an illness.

The main part of this film tells the story of one patient, Anne. She is shown at work in the studio where she paints a variety of suicide pictures, one of these contains half a dozen dangerous objects including a huge poison bottle. At a medical conference Anne's pictures are discussed, later she is shown being interviewed by her psychiatrist and he uses the paintings to help her in gaining further insight into her problems.

The 1962 Film, Diagnostic Categories in Psychiatric Art, deals with such illnesses as schizophrenia, depression and psychoneurosis. A selection of the pictures typical of each category is shown.

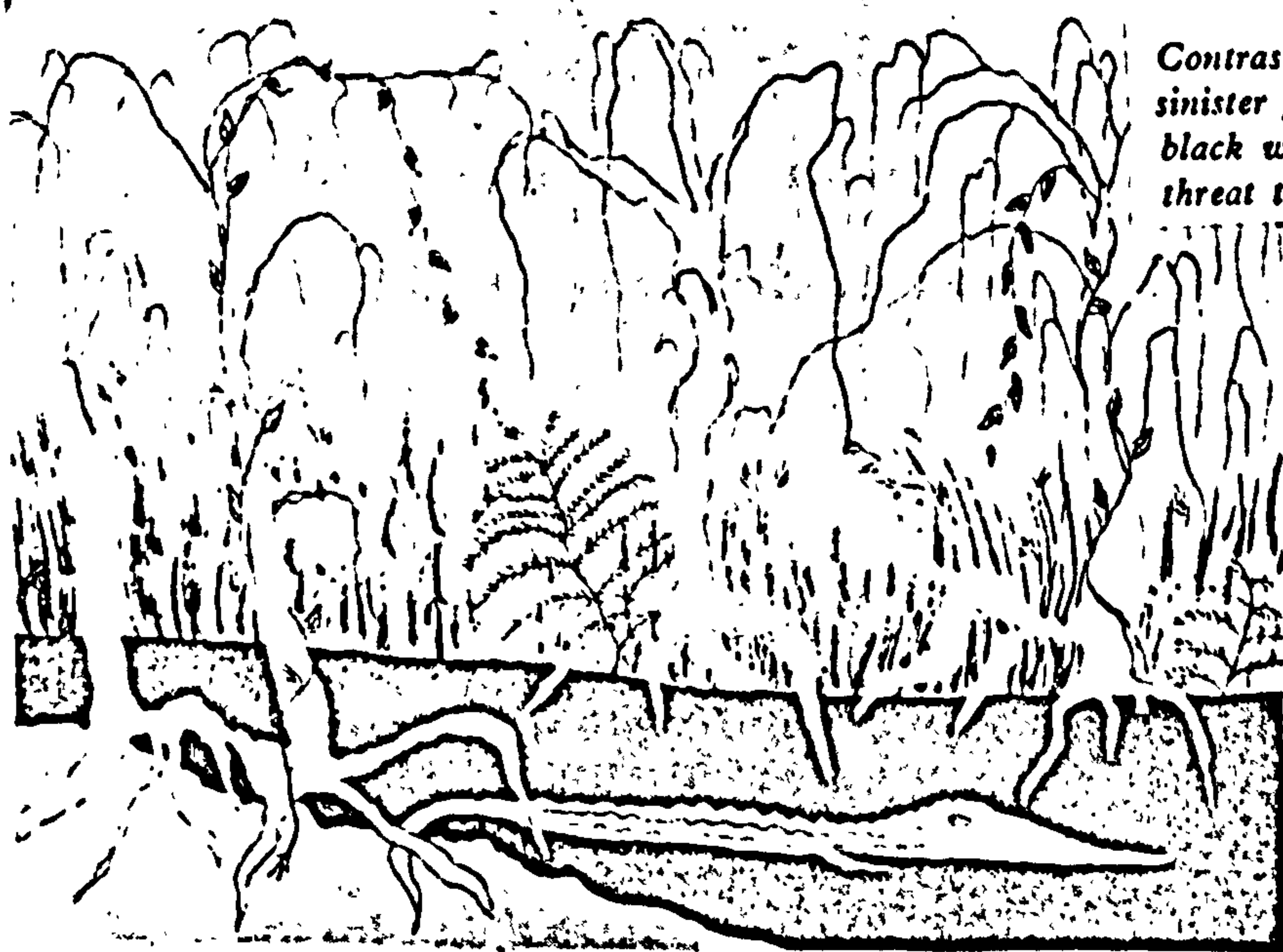
Many of these paintings are startling and exciting. Joyce



Laing writes of "The remarkable range and reserves of the human mind at times of stress." These paintings certainly prove this to be true. There are great craggy mountain scenes, exotic jungles, terrifying cliffs, vivid red volcanic nightmares, crucifixion themes, gigantic birds and lurking crocodiles. One series by a schizophrenic patient shows the gradual transformation of the head of a girl into a portrait electrified with threatening power.

In 1965 Joyce Laing completed a year's research in this field through a Nuffield grant. Part of her work in this connection was a fact finding survey of the position of Art Therapy in the Health Service. She was also concerned with art projects with psychoneurotic patients, alcoholics, schizophrenics and young people in an approved school.

An example of a picture from "The Aberdeen Collection"



*Contrasting with the delicately drawn foliage the sinister figure of a crocodile lurks ominously in the black water, symbolising the intangible sense of threat the patient is experiencing.*



In 1970 "Spontaneous Painting and Modelling", by E.M. Lyddiatt was published. Miss Lyddiatt has had many years experience organising art departments in psychiatric hospitals.

She says of spontaneous painting and modelling: "It might be described as an introverted activity, a method of linking the conscious and unconscious so that a new attitude can come into being. It is a deliberate effort to let a mood speak without seeking to control it, and without being overwhelmed by it." "Using painting to contact the unconscious is difficult work, full of contradictions and as complicated as life itself. It seems that the more one knows about it over the years, the more there is to know." 27

The 'Method' may be described as concern to provide the atmosphere in which patients can feel at ease, and therefore free to be spontaneous. There is a need to keep interference and even suggestions to a minimum. The organiser speaks through the conditions and materials she provides. There are no fixed standards, no attempt to teach art in a formal sense. References are made to channelling a force and encouraging the patient to watch what his imagination is doing.

A large proportion of space in the book is given to describing the work of individual patients and allowing the patients to speak about the 'art therapy experience' for themselves.

There are end of the world pictures, myths, dreams, towers, mazes, holy pictures, devils, psychiatrists depicted sometimes as devils, the sun and moon crashing and many landscapes and portraits.

According to the views expressed by some of the patients, in art therapy one carries on a conversation with an unknown part of oneself; the therapy lies in the act of painting or



modelling; the work may be a statement, a prayer or an act of rebellion. The importance of freedom, although sometimes misunderstood by patients and medical staff, is very often greatly valued as providing the opportunity for growth and unfoldment.

Lyddiatt concludes with the following statement: "This activity is deep and mysterious because one is contacting something unknown and realizing something new that is both constant and changing. It is of immediate practical value and seems to be never-ending." 28

One disturbing attitude expressed in the book is Lyddiatt's view, stated emphatically, that the work produced by the patients in art therapy is not art. But what is art? Roger Cardinal speaks of two aspects: A primary process of projecting unconscious forms from within, and a secondary process of controlled elaboration.

It would seem that in art therapy the stress tends to be on the primary process. But this comes nearer to highly imaginative work than much academic and traditional art. With the latter the secondary process often stifles the primary one.

According to Bader, and this is a psychiatrist speaking, 29 there is really no such thing as psychopathological art: "for the artistic phenomenon, the creative acts are not modified in their essence by mental illness". He then goes on to discuss the work of his patients in terms of their originality as art.

Yet another approach is to dismiss terms like 'sick and healthy' and think of a continuum of human experience. Perhaps all art is in some degree pathological. It is possible to picture a society that is so sane that no art is produced. But then one must ask what is sanity?



R.D. Laing has made some interesting observations on this subject: As J. Kovel says: "Laing is not content to merely tolerate madness as a valid form of experience; it becomes rather an act of heroism, a positive virtue, the negation of negative experience in alienated culture. The real madness is of those in power, from parent to president; the lunatic, socially defined, is potentially freed by his exclusion from society's power and bureaucracy; like Lear's Fool, like the maddened king himself, his craziness becomes the way out to a higher light." 30

Laing was able to see his antipsychiatric ideas in practice, especially at Kingsley Hall, London, made famous by Mary Barnes and her exuberant paintings. His method was to provide an intense and caring situation; the therapy was the opportunity given to patients to act out their fantasies, to 'go down' through the journey of madness and emerge with a new insight. The method was related to existential philosophy, the concept of community and the view that schizophrenia may be an alternative normality for certain people.



## Alienation

J. Dubuffet is an important example of an artist interested in the art of the alienated. He began building up his collection of 'art brut' (raw art) after the war. By the 1960s he had over one thousand items, including paintings, carvings and embroideries, by a hundred artists. Dubuffet sought the work of those individuals who were free, as far as possible, from cultural conditioning. He was attracted towards the innocent, the nonconformist, the recluse and the schizophrenic. He delighted in discovering examples of art that was original in the extreme, unpredictable, unformed and dynamic. Only art that embodies an authentic raw purity can be dynamic. Culture, in Dubuffet's opinion, selects, filters, reduces and sterilizes. He sought the ideal individualist, the jubilantly obstinant, the schizophrenic escaping the madness of sanity. He found that through asking for the minimum of conditioning he discovered the most truly creative work. 31

It is an implied criticism of our society if it can be shown that it is difficult to be original without being either alienated or insane. Perhaps the tendency towards conformity is a characteristic of most societies. This causes the unusual individual to feel threatened. Often the conformity is quite meaningless and may act as a limiting factor against creativity. People as a whole need educating to accept differentiation and divergence. In many highly developed urban societies there is opposition from youth. In "The Homeless Mind" reference is made to youth culture. Aspects of modernity are questioned by this culture. To organise one's day by the clock is to be 'uptight' rather than 'hanging loose'. To organise one's life by the calendar is to be a victim of the 'rat race'. 32



The youth culture is critical of the superficiality of modern social life, and terms such as alienation and dehumanization are used. The youth culture is also critical of status, ambition, wealth and power, and of order and conformity. However, there are paradoxes in the situation. For the non-standard to become the norm really requires that more than a few individuals show signs of originality.

To many people there is something wild and inevitably unpredictable about the creative process, this may be disconcerting; dead, accepted art products are more comfortable. There is sometimes a need to turn away from the pressures and tensions of everyday life in order to discover the centre of being. When you create you are alone and the centre of life is almost empty and nearly silent. As Roger Cardinal says: "Once we step inside the confines of an autistic sensibility, we are faced with a unique and incisive truth that casts its distinct spell. Which way do we jump when confronted with art that makes so few concessions?" 33

Scottie Wilson 1890-1972

'Outsider' Artist





## Universal Symbolism and Personal Symbolism

Original art is highly individual, but it is also linked with the universal. Archetypal images emerge - as if from the iceberg of the psyche - that may be derived from the experiences of the culture or the race. This idea has an association with Jung's theory of the collective unconscious. Unconscious forces are linked with creative art and dreams through symbols. Symbols are produced spontaneously, though they may be consciously elaborated later. Jung observes that man has developed a sense of cosmic isolation. Through scientific knowledge he has lost his emotional 'unconscious identity' with natural phenomena: "Thunder is no longer the voice of an angry god, nor lightning his avenging missile. No river contains a spirit, no tree is the life principle of a man, no snake the embodiment of wisdom, no mountain cave the home of a great demon. No voices now speak to man from stones, plants and animals, nor does he speak to them believing they can hear. His contact with nature has gone, and with it has gone the profound emotional energy that this symbolic connection supplied." 34

One has only to visit prehistoric sites to appreciate the symbolic significance to early man of great stones in wild places.

Marion Milner conveys the understanding that creative expression requires an attitude of daring and plunging into the unknown: "I want to suggest the possibility that a number of states of mind that are different from everyday conscious awareness may be in part an expression of the unconscious or half conscious need to give this creativeness its freedom." She defines psychic creativeness as the capacity for making a symbol. There is the realisation that the symbol goes beyond





Paul Nash

Landscape from a Dream 1936-8

Tate Gallery



logic, for the symbol is both itself and something else. One of her spontaneous drawings, "Bursting Seed-pod", was later seen to be "the irresistible thrust of life that was giving birth to new ideas and also how these were bursting through the seed-pod of the old world that gave them birth." 35

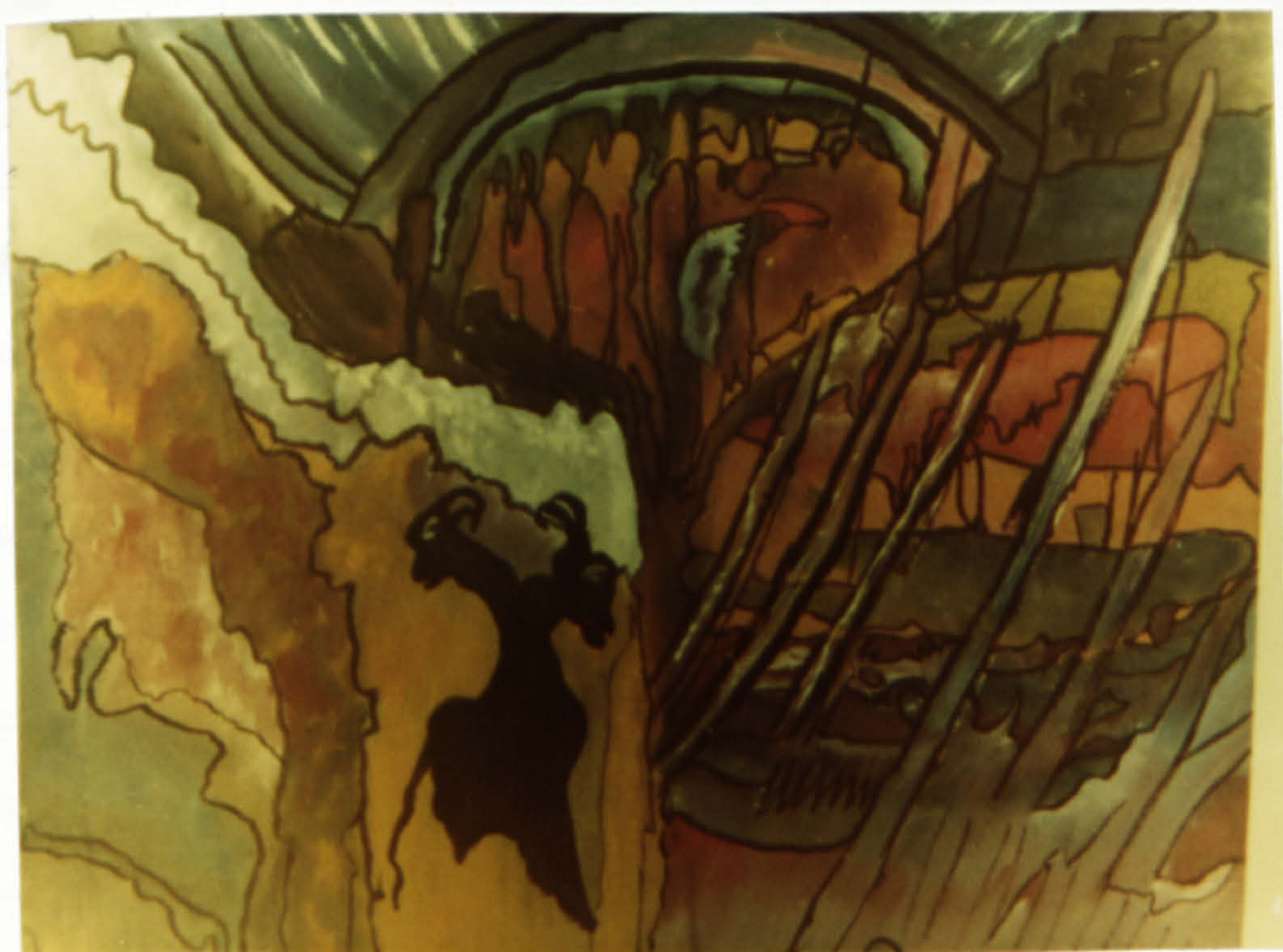
In order to regain something of this kind of feeling a leap beyond the intellect is necessary. The metaphysical and surrealist artists have made this attempt, mingling conscious and unconscious elements in their paintings, transcending the apparently contradictory. Paul Nash was very much attracted to the symbol. He painted pictures that reflected the hidden mysteries of nature or the drama of an event. He loved 'strange meetings' or 'encounters'. He was interested in opposing forces, light and dark, sun and moon, day and night, equinox and solstice. He understood that art was a way of balancing the outer world of objective fact and the inner world of ideas and imagination. He saw the sacred mound or mountain as the hill to which men lift up their eyes in hope; the serpent as the vital, untamed, upsurging energy; the flower as fulfilment and the sun as the giver of life, the divine symbol. In nocturnal landscapes megaliths could become transformed into mushrooms and the moon could stand for the mysterious and unknown. "Landscape from a Dream" seems to express something of the relationship between the inner and the outer worlds, the individual and the cosmos.

Creative art can help to integrate the various aspects of life, the inner and outer experience, hence one of the reasons for its therapeutic value. To find the rich, imaginative quality of symbolism it is necessary to turn to the spontaneous artist, whether he be child, genius or schizophrenic.



Schizophrenic Art

The picture below represents a large colour painting. It depicts a cave and part of a strange underworld landscape. It was done by a schizophrenic patient at Kingsway Hospital, Derby. It shows a number of characteristic features: It has a spiky, brittle, fragmented quality, with a barricaded approach to the entrance of the cave. The colour scheme is suggestive of something threatening or alarming and likewise the two-headed goat.





## Artistic and Schizophrenic Experience

There seem to be certain parallels between artistic and schizophrenic experience. Professor Carstairs, in his article "Art and Psychotic Illness", has this to say on the subject:

"The artist and schizophrenic, in their different ways, seem to preserve that acuteness of perception which Sir Herbert Read has described as 'the innocent eye' but the schizophrenics' awareness is not just the freshness of a child's outlook on the world. It is a heightened awareness indeed, but one heightened by dread. He is aware of an element of threat in his surroundings.

This is especially true during the active stage of the illness, which will sometimes break out again with renewed intensity after a certain period of relative calm....

Schizophrenia brings about bizarre and quite unfamiliar distortions of reality. In its early stages it can sometimes stimulate a more intense, though usually rather sinister awareness of the mystery behind normal phenomena. One is compelled to wonder in what does this mystery lie: perhaps it is an attribute of the beholder.

Early in the 20th century Dali and Tanguy were envious of the schizophrenic's faculty of living in a dream like state, even though the dream should often prove a nightmare. In the 1920s the term 'paranoid' had a positive value in aesthetic parlance and surrealists made it their aim to paint frankly psychotic imagery.

This was their tribute to the 'magical' quality of schizophrenic fantasy, a quality which was attributed in its origin in the unconscious mind...." 36

Schizophrenia may give rise to hallucinations and distortions



of perception. Although the schizophrenic is in one sense fettered by his illness, in another sense it frees him from inhibitions and from undue concern with the so-called logical and real world, he can take the direct route into fantasy.

In "Symbols of Transformation", C.G. Jung speaks of the archaic world of fantasy taking the place of reality in schizophrenia. 37

In 1924 Andre Breton, the poet, produced the Surrealist Manifesto. He expressed the belief that the apparent antagonism between dream and reality would be resolved in a kind of absolute reality - in "surreality".

The surrealist, when he explores the subconscious, may do so deliberately, cutting his way through the conventional and the traditional, as an experimenter. The enigmatic aspects of life, and the need for the artist to be an adventurer, are emphasised in the opinions of many poets and painters.

Max Ernst had only to look through an illustrated scientific catalogue: "I found here united elements such poles apart that the very incongruousness of the assembly started off a sudden intensification of my visionary faculties and a dream like succession of contradictory images - double, triple and multiple images coming one on top of the other, with the persistence and rapidity peculiar to memories of love, and to the dreams that come between sleeping and waking." 38

Jean Cocteau, the poet, maintains that even the sanest of artists is subject to some degree of schizophrenia, without which he can give us nothing of value. 39

H.G. Baynes, in "The Mythology of the Soul", says that the schizophrenic is often a daring voyager, responding to the violence of unconscious forces and fascinated by irrationality. 40



Aniela Jaffé says: "The apparent or actual retreat of man from many works of art, the lack of reflection, the predominance of the unconscious over consciousness offer critics frequent points of attack.

They speak of pathological art and compare it with pictures by the insane, for it is characteristic of the psychosis that consciousness and the ego-personality are submerged or drowned by floods of contents from the unconscious regions of the psyche.

It is true that the comparison is not so odious to-day as it was even a generation ago.

In 1932 Jung pointed out a connection of this kind in his essay on Picasso, it provoked a storm of indignation. To-day the catalogue of a well known Zurich art gallery speaks of the almost schizophrenic obsession of a famous artist, and the German writer Rudolf Kassner described Georg Trakl as 'One of the greatest poets', continuing 'There was something schizophrenic about him. It can be felt in his work, there is a touch of schizophrenia in it too. Yes Trakl is a great poet.'

Aniela Jaffé refers to several modern painters, such as Kandinsky, Chagall, Paul Nash, Klee and Chirico. They are quoted from their writings, and expressions such as fathomless melancholy and mysterious lonely poetry are used.

Chirico for example, thinks in terms of every object having two aspects; a common aspect, and a metaphysical aspect. He maintained that the artist should be aware of the latter, and be able to convey it in his work: "A work of art must relate something that does not appear in its visible form." 41

It is a certain magical quality related to a desire to break the mirror and get behind the facade that provides the imaginative artist with a link with the schizophrenic.



In many surrealist pictures there may be unusual encounters with strange objects: Paul Nash, for example, enjoyed the sudden impact of unexpected relationships; the Avebury monoliths and the white trumpet of the convolvulus, or the incongruity of a tennis ball or picture frame poised on a remote sweep of the downs.

In 1946, just before his death he was working on a series of sunflower paintings. But were they sunflowers or were they fiery meteors whirling dazzling and transiently through the atmosphere?

Margaret Naumberg, in her concluding remarks on two schizophrenic girls writes: "Schizophrenic art often contains fragmentation of forms, distortion of shapes, regression to archaic or primitive levels of the unconscious, the substitution of a symbol for an idea, and the drawing of human features from different viewpoints, simultaneously. Such devices are employed quite frequently in the work of many of the most original and successful artists. But few clues are available as to why most of these creators chose their strange symbols."

She refers to a number of artists, such as Bosch, Breughel, Picasso, Klee and Dali, and goes on to say:

"Do not such a range and variety of creations produced by great and skillful artists of different ages, force us to reconsider the possibly broader significance and purpose of fragmentation, distortion, archaism, and double focus as expressed in works of art, whether these are projected by individuals who are regarded as normal or mentally disturbed? The advent of dynamic psychiatry now makes it possible to recognize that such modes of expressing inner experience are universal to man whether he is ill or well." 42



The picture below is the work of one of my mature 'O' Level art students from the 1974-75 year. She produced the painting entirely spontaneously. It says more than words about how it feels to be the mother of a schizophrenic boy.



Help Me!





Ada Wightmore

Schizophrenia

The collage above is made of pipe cleaners, cocktail sticks and spills. It was designed to suggest how it may sometimes feel for the art therapist trying to understand a schizophrenic person: It is as if the personality has been shattered, fragmented into a thousand pieces, and yet it is radiating a message - perhaps we should listen.



## Psychological Problems in Schizophrenia

Many people have attempted to understand and establish contact with the schizophrenic. The problem of understanding may be as profound as existential philosophy; the problem of contact as difficult as building a bridge across quicksand.

Two examples from the literature will illustrate this:

Firstly, DR. Meares, an Australian psychiatrist. He speaks with reference to a patient undergoing treatment - art used as part of psychotherapy.

"she would misinterpret something. I had blundered..A great gulf would come between us. We were strangers again, and her distress had returned. At such moments I would be hard put upon to hide my disappointment. The worst of it was knowing that these painful estrangements were of my making. The awareness was always with me that these failures were due to a faulty approach on my part. It was the old problem of not knowing enough. I would make contact with her, and then in a moment it would be lost." 43

The second example is from Dr. R.D. Laing. He describes the way in which the schizophrenic feels threatened: "To be understood correctly is to be engulfed, to be enclosed, swallowed up, drowned, eaten up, smothered, stifled in or by another person's all-embracing comprehension. It is lonely and painful to be always misunderstood, but there is at least from this point of view a measure of safety in isolation."

Dr. Laing refers to the way the psychotic may feel on fire or imploded. On account of these feelings there is a need for defensive action, hence the false-self system, the elaborate games of pretence and equivocation.

Life is felt to be confusing because what is desired, 'the



moment of recognition', causes panic.

Dr. Laing refers to the way schizophrenics use red-herring speech and prolonged filibustering to throw dangerous people off the scent: "The self, as one patient puts it, feels crushed and mangled even at the exchanges in an ordinary conversation.... His outward behaviour is a defensive system analogous to innumerable openings to underground passages which one might imagine would take one to the inner citadel, but they lead nowhere or elsewhere. The schizophrenic is not going to reveal himself for casual inspection and examination to any philandering passer-by." 44

Apart from the features of the illness, which may make the patient feel poisoned or possessed, there are the basic difficulties of the schizoid personality. People of this type have been described as: "unsociable, serious, humourless, severe, aloof, suspicious, cool, harsh, reticent, misanthropic, calm, cold, calculating, self-centred, shut-in fanatical."

Nevertheless, many of the important steps in human progress have been made by the schizothymic type of individual. Newton, Voltaire, Faraday and Einstein may be taken as examples; and of course a list of schizoid artists would include a high proportion of outstanding names.

Individuals of this type tend to find verbal communication difficult, particularly with regard to social situations. Macfarlane Smith maintains that high spatial ability is often associated with the schizothymic type. 45

Artistic expression may be very important for certain schizophrenic patients, especially if they find verbal methods of communication difficult.



## The Characteristics of Schizophrenic Art

Schizophrenia is by far the most interesting mental illness from the point of view of artistic expression.

Certain features have been observed as being to some extent typical of schizophrenic art, Reitman, Dax and Bader have, for example, referred to them and they may be summarised as follows:-

### 1. Primitive Simplicity

The schizophrenic is not usually interested in illusions of space, volume, tone or accuracy of anatomy. Linear contours are always clearly defined. His work may look like primitive cave art or like the deliberately simplified work of modern artists.

### 2. Over-elaboration

This may be described as the habit of using various dots and markings over the surface of the picture and cramming the page until all the space is used up. There may even be a phobia against empty space.

### 3. Stereotypy

This is a mechanical repetition of shapes and themes.

### 4. 'Writing In'

Words, sentences and signs may be used as part of the picture. Reitman says this is a symptomatic feature of Western chronic psychotic painting. It cannot, of course, be so considered in Chinese or Japanese art.

### 5. Decorative Abstraction

There is a tendency to move as far away as possible from human themes.

### 6. Transparency

The habit of showing X-ray views, as for example, when the objects in a room are seen through the solid walls. This is often observed in child art.



## 7. The Inappropriate use of Colour

Often bold colours are used such as red.. There may be an unpleasant choice of colours. Purple and black are frequently selected. Aggressive aspects of schizophrenia may be worked out through the use of violent colours.

## 8. Distortion

Shapes and forms may be twisted and pulled out of their regular pattern. Animal and human figures may have exaggerated parts. There may be parts of the body cut off. For example, a painting from Ceylon called 'Beheading' showed the patient holding his own head in his hand.

## 9. Pictorial Agglutination

Pictures showing this feature can be frightening. One head may be united with another. The figure of a boy may become part of his father's leg.

## 10. Bizarre Appearance

There may be composite figures half animal and half human. There may be figures with many heads and limbs. Some of these pictures may be bewildering, but also exciting.

## 11. Mystical Themes

The schizophrenic has a tendency to present his own conception of the universe. He may be interested in painting in order to transform the real world by the magic of his painting. He may wish to restructure reality with reference to some system of delusion.

## 12. Morbid Themes

The patient may be afraid of being trampled down by people. This may show in his art. He may be obsessed with death, or excited by fire. There may be intense feeling of inexplicable mental frustration. There may be a persecution fear.



One patient described by Reitman, was discharged from hospital and she believed that 25 people were persecuting her with electricity. She modelled 25 masks, all in different colours to represent these people. It must have been one of the strangest motives for artistic creation recorded. 46

### 13. Chaotic Disorganisation

If there is conceptual deterioration the disintegrated patterns may be the expression of a disintegration of the personality.

### 14. The Schizophrenic Barrier

Many paintings are broken in two distinct halves by a line or barricade. There may be a picture depicting the real universe in one section and an imaginary universe in the other.

Anastasi and Foley give an amazingly comprehensive list of the characteristics of psychotic art:-

"....Incoherent, inconsistent and chaotic organisation; incomprehensible mixture of fragments of objects or persons; lack of integration; distortions of perspective; ideoplastic rather than physioplastic representation; disproportion of body parts; lack of symmetry; exaggeration; individual mannerisms and idiosyncrasies; neologisms; untidiness; crude, naive, schematic representation; stiffness, absurdity and grotesqueness; baroque over-elaboration and ornamentation; uniformity and monotony; stereotypy; perseveration; the production of 'chain figures' and grape-like or cauliflower formations; minuteness of detail and meticulous execution; stylized, abstract, geometrical representation, originality, bizarreness, eccentricity, obscenity, obscure and exaggerated use of symbols; unnatural, fantastic and violent use of colour, unusual and curious use of materials,



autism, free association and flight of ideas; 'horror vacui' or the compulsive filling in of the available space; reliance upon fortuitous arrangements, such as clouds, smoke, spots on paper; inclusion of letters, words and algebraic symbols in drawings; evidences of motor in-co-ordination and tremors in certain organic cases. Stylistic resemblances have been noted between such products and those of children and primitive groups." +7

With respect to subject matter the peculiarities most frequently cited are: representation of delusional ideas, illusions and hallucinations, predominance of religious themes, allegories, supernatural and fabulous beasts. Ambitious projects, portrayal of gruesome objects as well as scenes of ruin and catastrophe.

Visual hallucinations naturally have a great influence on artistic expression. One schizophrenic patient at the Maudsley Hospital had a vision of 10,000 figures. They were 20 metres high and passed across the sky in half an hour. A patient may paint and describe an experience of this kind for many years.+8

J.H. Plokker, who is a Professor of Psychiatry and also a trained artist, says that schizophrenia remains something of a mystery. As the disease is so varied in its manifestations generalisations are hardly possible. He therefore gives warning against making dogmatic statements regarding the characteristics of schizophrenic art. It is necessary for a patient to be known thoroughly as a person, in order that his work may be studied in context.

Many of the publications on this subject are concerned with the 'Content' of the artistic productions. Plokker is particularly interested in the 'Form' of such work. There are many factors to be taken into account. The schizophrenic process may be rather difficult to isolate. A work could be either unskilled or just



deliberately disruptive and appear pathological.

Plokker is interested in the disturbances in the experiencing of space and time in schizophrenic patients, and in the pictorial expression of such disturbances. There are, for example, paintings which give the spectator strange feelings regarding distance; there are often X-ray pictures that reveal 'Alice in Wonderland' ideas about body size. There are paintings that seem outside all normal notions of past, present and future. 49

Colour is another important subject. The balancing of the colours often presents problems to patients unable to apprehend mutual relationships. There is a need for caution with regard to the interpretation of colour symbolism.

On the subject of content, there is sometimes difficulty in distinguishing between pure fantasy and the representation of hallucinations. There is need for discussion with the patient, though of course the verbal account may itself be misleading or incomprehensible.

There are often mask-like portraits and landscapes that show the world to be a facade: meaningless, hollow and empty. Many of these pictures express individual and personal tragedy through the symbolism of world disaster; they give more than a hint of the schizophrenic fear of being threatened.

Many schizophrenic pictures are exciting, the so called psychotic characteristics could well be applied to the art of highly original individuals, to the genius in fact. Perhaps we ought not to judge people along the crude polarity of madness and sanity. The Viennese artist Ernst Fuchs sees madness as the logical next step after reason in the dialectic leading to true intellectuality.



Probably the most far-sighted individual to write upon this subject was H. Prinzhorn.\*

He observed that although certain features, such as over-elaboration; arbitrary, free treatment of the outside world and absurd discrepancy between what is visually presented and its meaning may indicate schizophrenic tendencies; nevertheless, these features may not be distinctive to schizophrenic configuration. Prinzhorn saw the fundamental characteristic of the schizophrenic's approach to be the inability to seek resonance in other people. He spoke of detachment from humanity: "The schizophrenic.... by definition is neither willing nor able to reestablish contact with it. If he were he would be healed. We sense in our pictures the complete autistic isolation and the gruesome solipsism which far exceeds the limits of psychopathic alienation, and believe that in it we have found the essence of schizophrenic configuration." 50

Prinzhorn saw many similarities between the schizophrenic outlook as expressed in the art of the insane and the break up of the traditional outlook leading on to modern expressionism. He saw the difference to lie in the fact that the schizophrenic artist had to adapt to the psychotic transformation of his world, while the healthy artist turned away deliberately from his familiar reality.

"Untrained mentally ill persons, especially schizophrenics, frequently compose pictures which have many of the qualities of serious art and in their details often show surprising similarities to the pictures of children and primitives, as well as to

\* Prinzhorn (1886-1933) studied philosophy and art history in Vienna. Subsequently, he turned to medicine and psychiatry. He collected about 5,000 artistic samples for the Heidelberg Psychiatric Clinic and undertook a comparative study of the works and patients.



those of many different cultural periods. Their closest relationships, however, are with the art of our time because of the fact that contemporary art, in its search for intuition and inspiration, consciously strives after psychic attitudes which appear as a matter of course in schizophrenia." 51

In fact, Prinzhorn says, and we must remember he was writing in the early 1920s: "If we carefully observe the arts today we find a number of tendencies active in all of them, the fine arts as well as all branches of literature, to which only a genuine schizophrenic could do justice."

He speaks of nuances in modern art familiar to us in schizophrenics; of a craving for direct intuitive experience, mystical and metaphysical interests and a tense, ambivalent hesitation in facing the problems of the times.

It is interesting to note that Prinzhorn studied the varied reactions of many people to the psychiatric art collection:

"As far as the pictures' relationship to contemporary art is concerned, we were able to observe a succession of reactions which clearly showed the influence of emotions or personal interest on every individual judgment. Whereas culturally conservative and historically oriented persons either did not react to the individuality of the pictures at all or tried to reinterpret fleeting impressions into cultural and political tendencies, all the observers who live with the problems of pictorial configuration or are closely involved with abnormal psychology responded eagerly to the strangest works. Some of the artists, among them conservatives and, on the other hand, extreme expressionists, gave themselves up to a calm study of the pictures' peculiarities, admired numerous pictures without stint, and dismissed others, without even considering dividing them up into those that are healthy and those that are sick. Others again, belonging to very different schools, renounced all the material as nonart, but nevertheless paid lively attention to all its nuances. A third group, finally, were shaken to their foundations and believed that they had found the original process of all configuration, pure inspiration, for which alone, after all, every artist thirsts. Some of them underwent a series of developmental crises from which in the end they found their way back to greater knowledge about themselves and their work." 52



## Van Gogh

J.H. Plokker says: "The diagnosis of 'schizophrenia' is not completely certain in the case of van Gogh, although many think that it is correct." 53 As far as the influence of the schizophrenic process on creativeness is concerned; it would appear that it may act as a stimulation, at certain times, in certain circumstances and during certain phases. In Van Gogh's case it would seem that when he left for Arles in 1888 a period of greatly heightened awareness and feverish activity began. During the years from 1888-90 more paintings were carried out than in all the previous years together. Many people consider his art of the Provencal period as his most important aesthetically, with the Dutch, Antwerp and Paris phases merely the prelude. He was probably only understood by one person, his brother. In reading his letters to his brother there is the feeling of the emergence of a highly differentiated artist, of a person working in response to inner conviction. Of course the influences of Impressionism and Japanese prints also played a part in the way his art developed.

From Arles he wrote that he was hard at it and painting with enthusiasm. He vividly described his plans for the painting of the great sunflowers, sometimes a dozen or more at a time. He stressed the fact that he had heaps of ideas for new canvases. He wrote of his personal approach to the actual technique of painting, of stippling, haloes, original and varied strokes with the brush and the search for simplicity. 54

A decade earlier, in Amsterdam, he had written of the importance of never letting the fire go out in one's soul. It was at Arles that he kept that fire burning. His paintings were truly amazing, his sunflowers painted as if his brush was



on fire and the petals prominences from the sun. But interwoven with the inspiration there were hints of problems and paradoxical situations. The official tradition in art was described as worm-eaten and impotent and yet alive. New painters were described as alone, poor and treated like madmen. Of himself, he said: "The more I am spent, ill, the cracked pot, by so much the more am I the artist - the creative artist." 55 He wrote of working at white heat, of the great struggle, of enthusiasm for the vineyards, the need to beware of his nerves and of living for four days on bread and twenty-three cups of coffee. He described how sixteen hours of sleep at a stretch restored him. 56 He made the observation that so many painters are cracked in one way or another and this is a consolation. He seemed to feel conscious of being a stepping-stone for others, but would like to know for whom and for what. 57 One wonders what he would have thought of a later scene, of the Van Gogh Museum and people quietly studying his pictures or buying his prints. Can even the cultural section of the community only accept high creativity in safety and in retrospect?

"The Starry Night", painted in June, 1889, must surely represent one of the peaks of creative expression, not only for Van Gogh, but for art generally. Yet this picture was produced just one month after he had been taken to the sanatorium of St. Remy following a second mental breakdown. In this painting he achieves a cosmic synthesis, with stars, earth and sky revolving in a flaming atmosphere. Arnason says of this work, that it is both intimate and vast: "... the little village in the valley rests peacefully under the protection of the church spire; and over all the stars and planets of the universe whirl and explode..." 58



Altogether an entrancing series of paintings emerged from the year at St. Remy, olive trees, mountains and above all the cypresses. Landscapes such as "Cypresses with Two Figures" and "The Road with Cypresses and Star" are so alive that words like electrifying, pulsating or scintillating seem inadequate to convey their uncanny power. As Meyer Schapiro points out: "By force of van Gogh's ecstatic exaltation, a real landscape acquires an unearthly character." 59 These paintings seem like a kind of bridge spanning the inner and outer reality. They also bridge the intellect and the emotions in terms of calculated study and integration on the one hand and depth of feeling on the other.

Van Gogh wrote from St. Remy: "I gather from others that they have heard during their attacks strange sounds and voices, as I have, and that to their eyes too things seemed to be changing. That lessens the horror that I had at first of my attacks, which when they come on one unawares cannot but frighten one beyond measure." 60 Van Gogh makes a number of observations regarding the therapeutic value of painting, for example: "The work on my pictures seems essential to my recovery." and "I am working like one actually possessed. I think this will help to cure me." and again: "I am struggling with all my energy to master my work, thinking that if I win, that will be the best lightning-conductor for my illness." 61 At Auvers, in his final works, and especially "Crows over the Wheat Field", there is the feeling of the individual being merged into a throbbing, and flickering vastness. Perhaps the tragedy lies in how little Van Gogh could sense future appreciation of his genius and of his value as a stepping-stone to so many people.

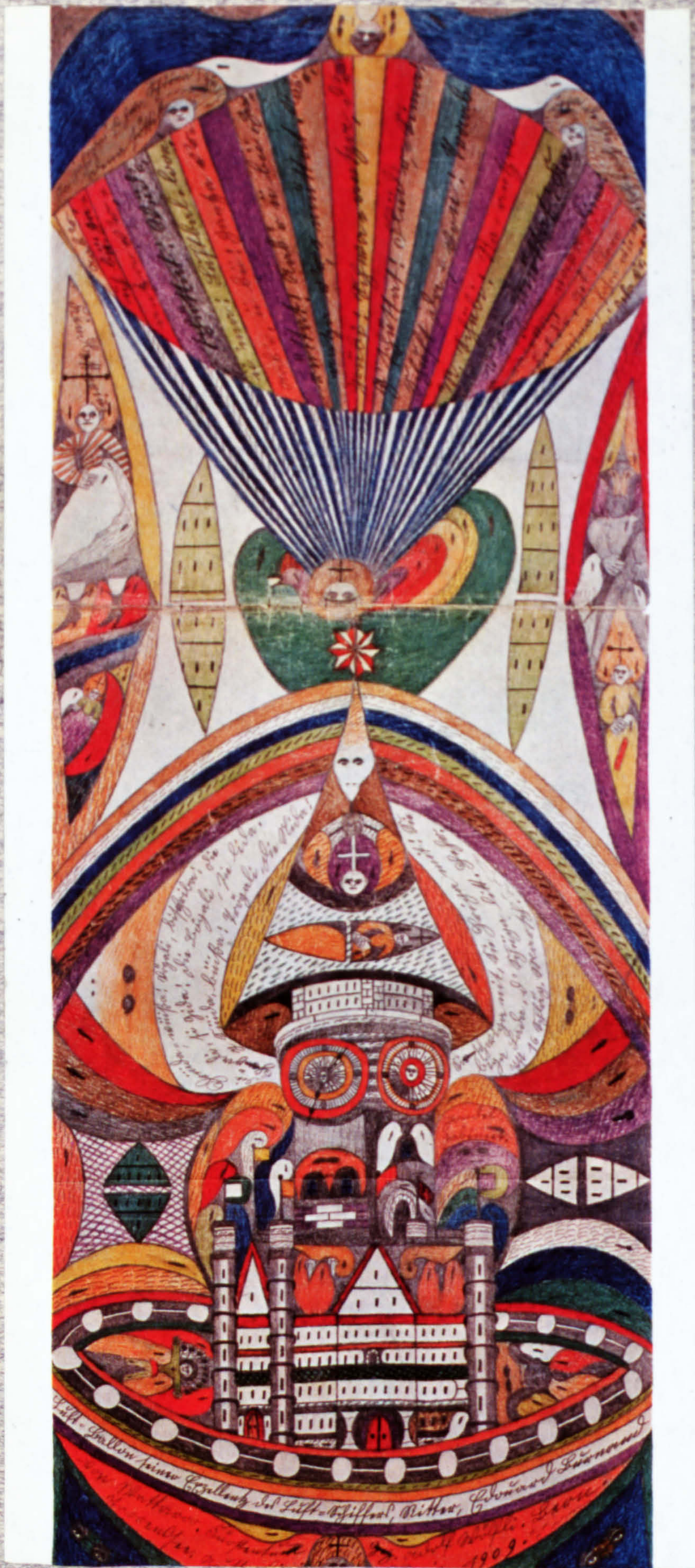




Adolf Wölfli  
1864-1930

Mental Asylum 1910  
Stiftung, Kunstmuseum Bern





Adolf Wölfli 1864-1930 Balloon 1909



## Adolf Wölfli

Wölfli was diagnosed schizophrenic in 1895 and spent 35yrs. in an asylum in Berne. In his youth he had been a farm labourer, railway worker, fisherman and migrant; but also a poet, composer and draughtsman. In his imaginary biography he was St. Adolf II, Master of Algebra, Captain of the Almighty-Giant-Steamship and Doctor of Arts and Sciences. In the asylum he became a prolific and creative schizophrenic. He produced 44 illustrated books - covering 20,000 pages, with over 1,000 drawings and 1,500 collages. His books corresponded to folios of newspaper format reaching over two metres high. His poems, prose, musical compositions and pictures form a complete whole with ingenious interrelationships between the arts. 62

### A Visit to the Exhibition of the Pictures of Adolf Wölfli at the ICA 6/6/79

Wölfli's pictures filled two large rooms and an alcove. The general impression conveyed by the work was a twin response: a feeling of amazement regarding the range of themes and equal amazement regarding the way the themes, sometimes violent, were brought under pictorial control. Many different kinds of artists might find inspiration here: His art demonstrates how disconcerting and aesthetic elements can be combined. It reveals schizophrenic and surrealistic features, symbolic imagery, fantasy, mandala-like constructions and labyrinthine complexity, as well as the qualities of illuminated manuscripts and certain characteristics of textile design. The titles alone suggest a diversity of interests: "Town Plan of Berne", "Negro Goddess", "Pacific Ocean", "Organ with the Gift of Speech", "Steam-Propeller and Dynamo-Generator", "Wisdom at the Zenith", "Balloon" and "Mental Asylum".



## Breaking Down the Barriers between Psychiatric Art and Fine Art

There have been a number of exhibitions in art galleries recently of work by psychiatric patients and 'Outsider Artists'. Early in 1978 the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford showed "The Inner Eye" Exhibition, the art of patients from psychiatric hospitals. In the summer of 1978 the Third Eye Centre in Glasgow displayed the art of three schizophrenics from Swiss mental hospitals - Wölfli, Aloïse and Müller. The Hayward Gallery, London offered the "Outsiders" Exhibition early in 1979. The 'Outsider Artist' Scottie Wilson (1890-1972) had his pictures displayed at the Fieldborne Galleries, St. John's Wood, from February - April. The ICA showed the pictures of Wölfli during May and June 1979. Perhaps this interest in the subject is something more than mere curiosity. It may be that there is a genuine feeling in certain quarters for the creativity of the individual, regardless of whether it emerges from a background of art college, psychiatric hospital or private retreat. During the course of conversation Dr R.C. Salzberger stated that it is necessary to ask whether it is justifiable to allow one's evaluation of an art product to be influenced by information concerning the artist's state of mind while producing it. It can be appreciated that a work of art has an intrinsic worth, in this sense such information is largely irrelevant.



## Manic-Depressive Psychosis

This is a mental disorder which alternates between periods of excitement and periods of depression. John Gale was a staff writer on the 'Observer' and wrote an autobiography entitled: "Clean Young Englishman" in which he described this kind of mental breakdown: "I am what they like to call a manic-depressive; they love to label us. When I am manic I am close on six feet tall; when I am depressed I am not much over five feet ten inches. If I am manic, my watch gains five minutes a week; if I am depressed, it loses five minutes a week. When I am manic my beard and fingernails grow faster. In depression my hair lies down; when I am manic it stands up electrically, catching sensations like antennae."

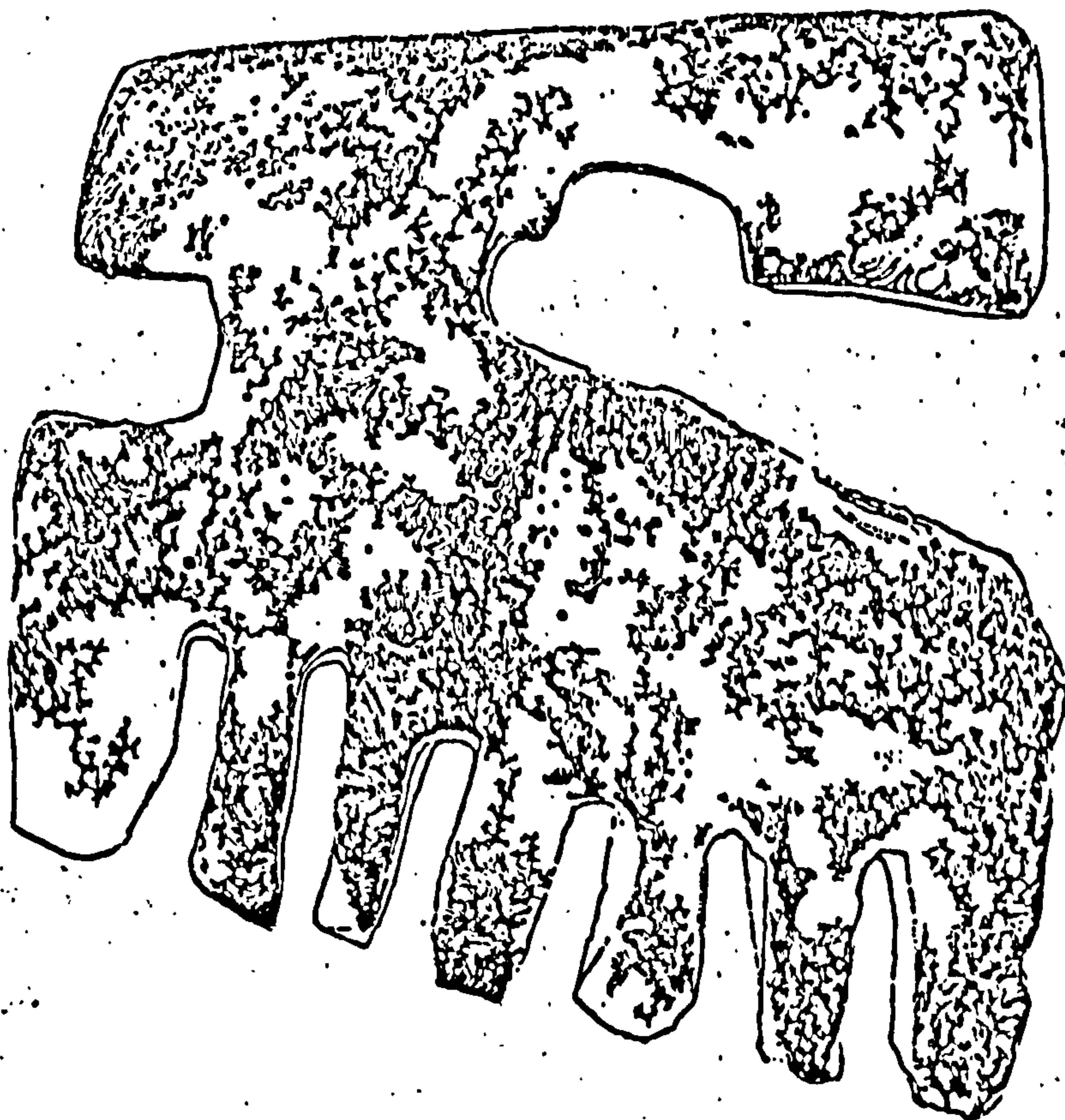
".... Electricity is God; so I thought when my mind was unhinged. Madness is a time of perception, of reality."

".... I caught the thoughts of others in the air then. But people do not always forgive you for what you see in this state: for you see what is behind a man's eye." John Gale said that when he was manic he felt fine, but got into trouble; depression is safer and lasts longer.

When he was in hospital he made a seven-legged mechanical monster during therapy sessions and wrote the following note about it: "Make the key of life. Make it the shape it has to be, the shape that echoes all the senses: visual, musical, sensual, and the way of all life. Make the surface rough, so that it can catch the stuff of life: seed blown by the wind, humus and earth; make it so that it can feel, breathe and drink water, let it be rough on the surface and not smooth, so that it can catch and nourish life; for if smooth and siliceous it is a reversal of nature, it is the anti-life, the bringer of fire and burning, of Martian and Saturnalian shapes. Let it be ear, mouth and eye, the insect's nest, the Minotaur's labyrinth; the synthesis of that lost insect and animal paradise from which we all came."



John said that the first shape he made to fulfil these conditions blew up in the kiln when it was being baked. He observed that the fate of that shape and the conception of it seemed typical of his life. He made another shape, because he felt a compulsion to do so, this time the kiln broke down, and the shape came out dull black. He took the form home, but it so upset his wife that he stuck plaster on parts of its surface and painted the plaster red and varnished it. The red seemed to make it less forboding. It was allowed to stay on his desk, a talisman. "The mechanical monster has mouth and eye (reminiscent of a spanner's) and, between the legs, six gaps which, together with the mouth and eye, represent the musical scale. It is in some way prehistoric!" 63



*'On my desk is a shape of foreboding. I made it in a clinic when I was crazy: they called it occupational therapy. The shape is like a seven-legged monster.'*



John Gale's account conveys much of the characteristic feelings relating to the Manic-Depressive type of illness with the very striking swings in mood. During periods of elation the attitude tends towards optimism and extreme self-confidence. Everything is undertaken with feverish rapidity and concentration may be difficult. Art produced at such times may be very lively and colourful, often involving textural qualities and bold brush strokes. During periods of depression there may be a complete lack of interest in the environment and an attitude of abnormal pessimism for which no explanation can be found. If painting is undertaken at such times it is likely to depict scenes of extreme hopelessness: black caves, trees without leaves, no flowers, dark clouds, drooping forms or threatening storms.

In the field of literature Virginia Woolf may be taken as an example of a person suffering from this sort of illness. During her creative periods there were avalanches of manuscripts and the habit of writing and rewriting endlessly. She found great joy in writing, but came near to collapse with the completion of a book. Leonard Woolf doubted if she was ever really sane and felt that her genius was closely connected with her mental instability and the remorseless inverted logic of her insanity.



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## **CHAPTER VI**

### **Creativity and the Psychiatric Patient**



## Introduction

The Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 'The Inner Eye' Exhibition and Seminar.

## Hospitals

Cheadle Royal, Cheshire

Hill End, St Albans

Netherne, Surrey

Springfield, London

Warlingham Park, Surrey

Barnsley Hall, Bromsgrove

Rainhill, Nr. Liverpool

Middlewood, Sheffield

Parkside, Macclesfield

Prestwich, Manchester

Personal Experience using Art Therapy with Psychiatric Patients

Studies of Three Patients

A Summary of the Significance of Art Therapy

Art Therapy and the Psychiatrist

The Teaching Background of Art Therapy

The British Association of Art Therapists



Illustrations from the Catalogue of the Inner Eye Exhibition  
Gouache paintings of landscapes made by the epileptic  
patient who documented his fits.

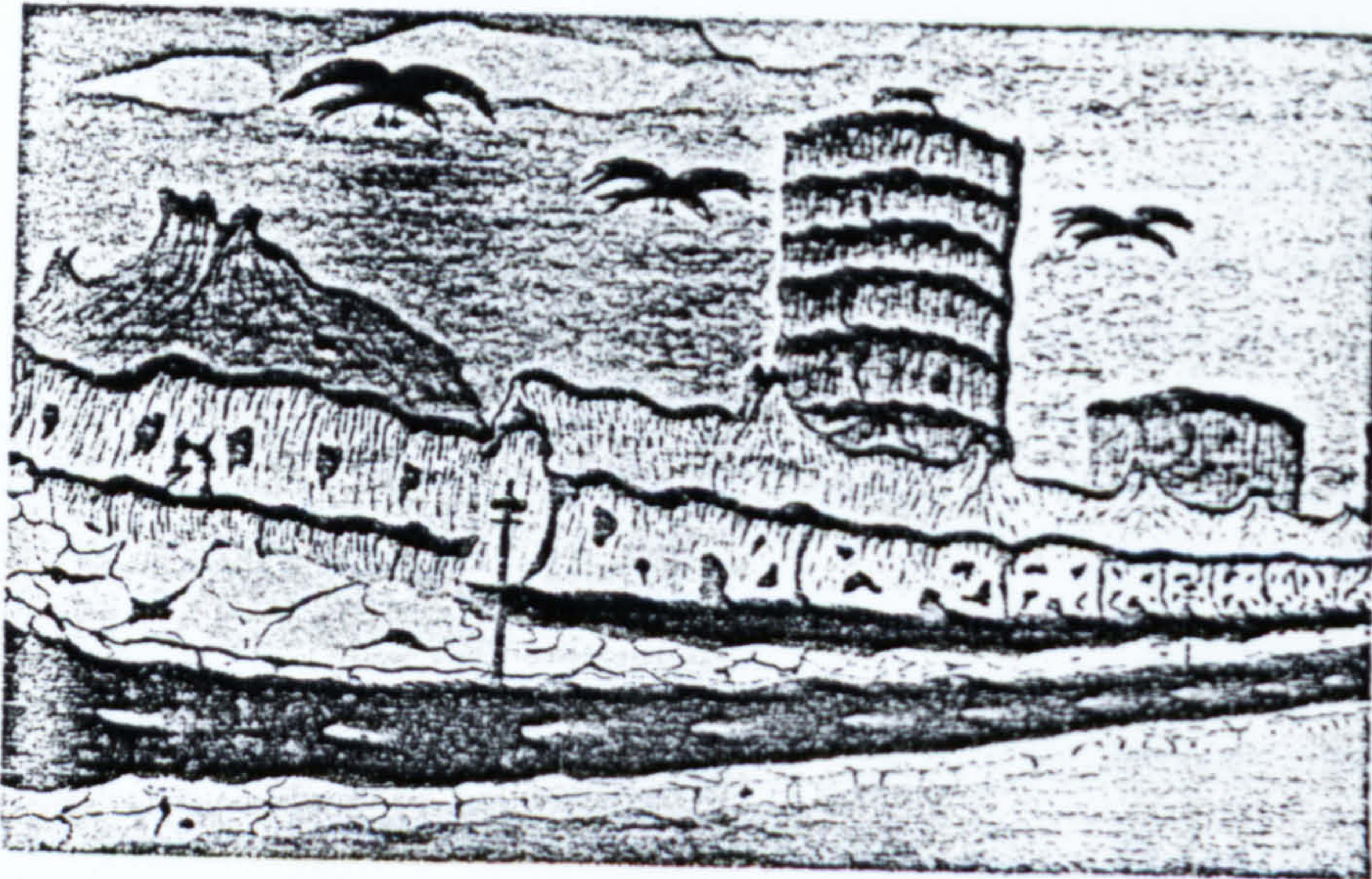


Illustration 9

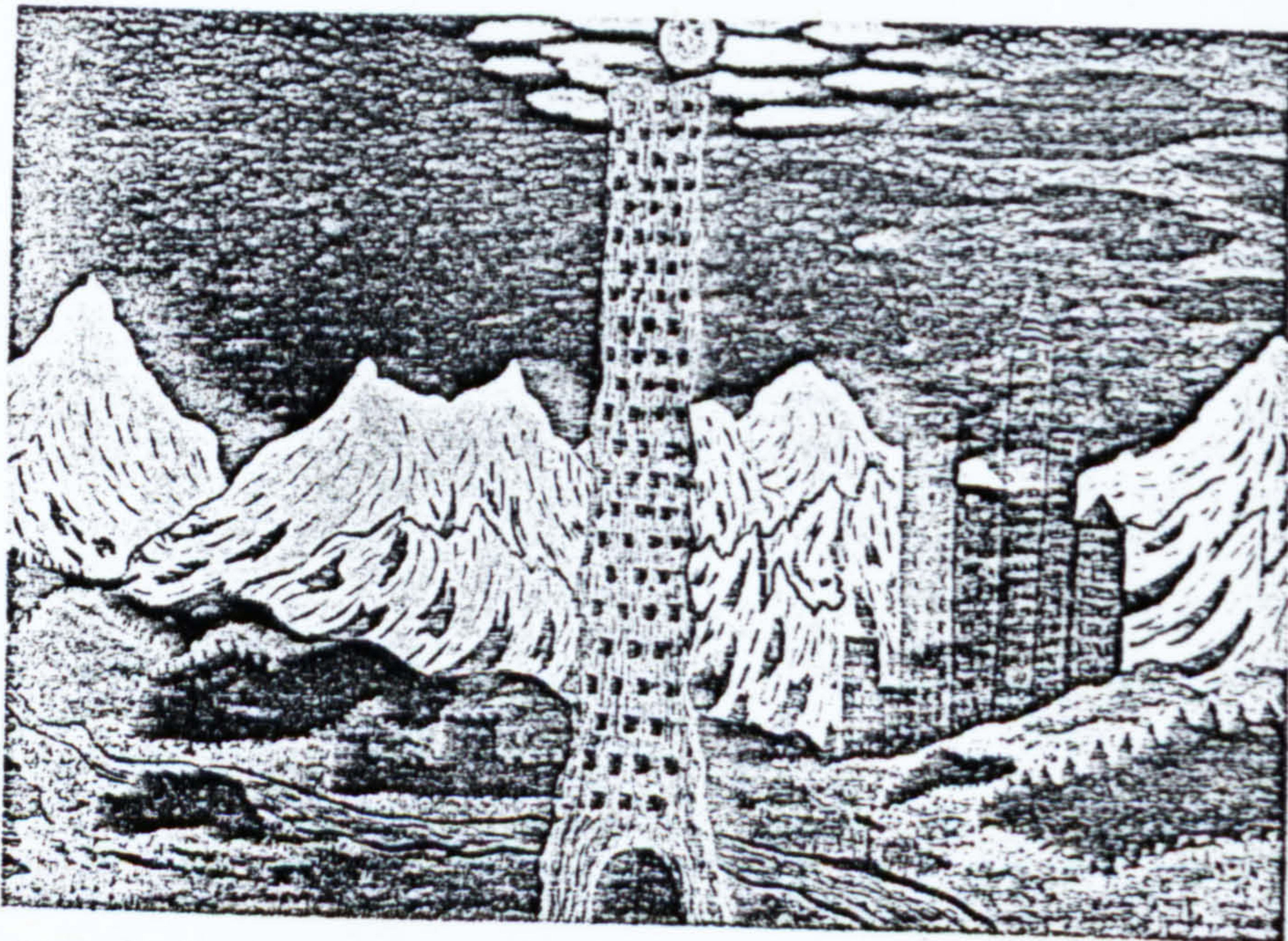


Illustration 10



## The Inner Eye

### An Exhibition of work made in psychiatric hospitals

The Museum of Modern Art Oxford 15 January - 19 February 1978

This exhibition contains work from patients of all age groups selected from a large number of hospitals, child guidance clinics and day centres throughout the country.

February 15

Landscapes from the enchanted land of the imagination seems an appropriate way to suggest the subject matter of many of the pictures on show. Some are abstract fantasies of high or low moods; there are dreamlike images, transmissions of deeply held, often unconscious, feelings and obsessions.

David Elliott, the Museum Director, says: "The intensity of the images in this exhibition is overpowering - their implications are shattering. A similar intensity and possibility for creativity exists in all of us. This exhibition is a tribute to those who have let us see their work." 1

In Caroline Tisdall's review reference is made to the way some of the pictures capture a contemporary kind of terror: "Symbols of repressive authority crop up repeatedly, helmeted or not. Walls separate individuals or trap pathetic groups with snake tongued mother-figures and fire-breathing fathers. If the selection at Oxford is anything to go by, such a collection would be a damning document of our times." 2

As much as anything it was the range and variety of expression that was stimulating:

One epileptic patient had produced dramatic scenes of starry skies and flashing lights. He had documented his fits over a period of two years, representing the epileptic fits by a candle symbol.



There was a large piece of exquisite embroidery that had taken five years to complete. In purely artistic terms it must have been priceless. The patient thought of herself as high-born, of Persian origin, and yet always alive all over the world. It was as if her embroidery had grown, in an organic way, to suggest an integrated pattern, amazing colour relationships and a fertile imagination.

Another patient had written down her ideas about art, and concluded with the following statement: "Just think of all you can paint. It is wonderful."

Although most of the work on display was recent, there were also examples from the two significant collections of psychopathological art that have been made in this country, namely the Guttman MacLay collection and the Adamson collection.

From the Guttman MacLay collection were the famous cats by Louis Wain (1860-1939). The Maze, by William Kurelek, the painter, illustrator and author who died in November, 1977.

From the Adamson collection there were Kurelek's Life-Story and his Self Portrait - Where am I?  
Who am I?  
Why am I?



The Inner Eye

The Open Seminar held at the Oxford Museum of Modern Art

February 15, 3p.m.

There must have been something like two hundred people at this seminar. Some had come in groups as tutors and students from such places as Goldsmith's College, St. Albans and the Birmingham Polytechnic where there are full-time courses in art therapy. There were also many individual practising art therapists and teachers of art and the officials of the British Association of Art Therapists as well as the Director of the Museum. There was, therefore a good cross-section of the people involved with art therapy and education.

The seminar lasted for nearly two hours, it was very lively with a wide selection of individuals taking part.

The first group of questions and comments centred around the subject Is this work art?

Many of the people present said that they thought the work done by the patients could be seen as art. After all if a person outside an institution produces a free, spontaneous piece of textural delight, it is called abstract expressionism. If such an individual produces something obscure and dreamlike he may be regarded as a surrealist. Why, therefore should the work of psychiatric patients not be accepted on the same basic terms. It was as if the group were saying something about the fundamental dilemma of being human. We are all in this together, so why the divisions, why the them and us approach?

When one thinks of psychiatric art there comes to mind a number of anomalies and ambiguities, but is not this so with the whole drama of life on this planet?

Certainly, showing the pictures, framed and in a modern art



exhibition, helped to convey the feeling that the work should be considered within an aesthetic context. But there were a number of specific questions from the group that seemed to imply that further steps might be taken to break down barriers. For example, Why, apart from the special collections, are the works without names? Was it individual patients or their institutions that wanted anonymity? Somebody suggested that when patients bring forth images from their unconscious, images often linked with personal problems, they may be sensitive. Another question was a concern about labels such as schizophrenic, that were given.

Behind all this probing there came across a genuine humane desire to identify with the patients in a rather non-clinical way.

Another area that was considered by the group related to the link between art therapy and art education. It was observed that an art training is thought necessary for working as an art therapist. Some people were interested in how far personal experience through self-exploration as an artist was helpful. Reference was made to the philosophy of art colleges and to the philosophy of art education. Someone mentioned the fact that if the modern approach in teaching is assisting the learning process, then perhaps the gulf between teacher and therapist is not too great. The therapist has to hold back, but so also has the truly creative teacher.

Terms such as creativity and the creative process arose many times during the afternoon. It would have been interesting to record the number of times that the creative process was linked with the healing process in the comments. It was stated that all people may have need of creative therapy. Personal, private artistic expression should not be viewed as something



different in character from art therapy. The discussion now concentrated on the subject of healing. There were many people anxious to speak. What is getting better? What is being cured? One man said it reminded him of kippers! If all that society wanted was to see the patients fitting in without causing any trouble, then art may make them worse - more alive and more of a challenge to the status quo. Somebody mentioned the fact that the Department of Health like to think that the art therapy makes a contribution towards the healing process. Perhaps they would not want to finance pure recreation. It was suggested that even psychiatrists don't always know how to heal their patients. It was agreed expression is in some way helpful, because a problem or a feeling is externalised.

Finally, the subject of drugs was brought up, not the type that may stimulate, such as the psychedelic drugs, but the ones used since the 1950's to sedate the patients. It was felt by some people that these drugs were often used more to help the staff. If patients are subdued in this way their creativity is likely to suffer and something of value may be lost in the process.

Someone remarked that the beautiful piece of embroidery on show in the exhibition would probably not have emerged from the present day use of powerful drugs.

There was a general feeling that the people speaking in the seminar were flexible, open and sympathetic. They were interested in the borderlines between art, education and therapy. They were aware that questions were more important than answers in this field. Most of the questions were offered in a pioneering way, rather than because specific answers were expected.



Cheadle Royal Hospital - The Day Hospital1964

On the occasion of this visit there were three people painting. They were using powder colour or oil paints. One woman was painting the sky and fields, for the background of a landscape in broad, sweeping strokes. A man was painting a landscape by using individual brush strokes. He worked with great concentration and his expression never altered for a whole hour. The third patient was painting a large head.

This patient was more communicative than the other two. The head looked like herself, with lively blue eyes and curly hair. She said that it was a continuously recurring theme. In her folder there were another five or six paintings of the same person. She said that she did n't know exactly who it was, but it could well be herself.

She described her life before coming to the hospital as being completely without freedom. She was middle-aged and just beginning to feel a sense of purpose. The art was helping her to experience control over her situation.

The therapist stressed the importance of a group rather than a class and of letting the work develop naturally from the interests and feelings of the patients.

This corresponded with a personal view that the best teaching is often unobtrusive and indirect. The important thing is to teach self-reliance and faith in oneself.

The therapist thought that as every person was unique, it was not very helpful, from the point of view of her work, to think of different 'types' of patients. She regarded each one as an individual without a medical or psychological label.

This also fitted in with a personal view. It is possible to



over simplify human beings by terms that, perhaps, only describe a fraction of what they really are. There can be no easy understanding of the complex groupings of psychological characteristics that go to make up a human being. There are no short cuts to understanding anybody.

The Occupational Therapy Department provided creative opportunities for the patients everyday. These activities included weaving, embroidery, toy making, music and drama.

At the time of this visit the patients were helping with the Christmas decorations. They were designing angels, ice crystals, stars and 'stained glass' panels. There were some delightful camels, cut out of canvas with riders in metallic paper.

Afternoon activities in the Day Hospital were organised by the patients themselves. Usually one person would be responsible for an afternoon and arrange a quiz, games and perhaps a discussion. The relaxed atmosphere seemed very helpful.

2/2/78

Apart from seeing a very interesting psychiatric art exhibition in 1973, this was the date of the next visit.

There were about half a dozen patients painting. The art therapist had changed and she attended the hospital on three days per week.

She said that she liked the patients to use powder colour. Otherwise they were left free, with no subject suggestions made by the therapist. Painting was seen as a way for the patients to express their problems in a non-verbal situation. They might choose to state a problem or obsession shrouded in a type of very personal symbology. A frog and a butterfly may be painted to disguise - and reveal - the artist and his problem.

There was a desire to avoid the development of a too careful



technique, even the suggestion that a patient should explore the possibilities of working with the 'other' hand, in order to escape from a tight and laboured control. Naturally, finger painting was also seen as a useful, spontaneous approach. The Therapist said that it was not what she thought about a picture that was important, but rather what the patient thought about his own work and how it might be used as a starting point in communication.

The meaning of colour was felt to be significant. One patient was painting solid black clouds and a white path leading towards the golden yellow 'solution' broken by the clouds. Another patient had been working on a long series of very fine horse pictures and also a series of original bird designs. Art in this case was linked with specific interests. One of the paintings on the wall was of a divided globe with roots and hands reaching out, and a daffodil growing out of the top. The patient seemed to be searching, perhaps for a philosophy of some kind. The art therapy was held in its own separate 'house' in the grounds. This was probably helpful in creating a distinct atmosphere and a feeling of refuge. There was also scope for the continuous and idiosyncratic methods of display of pictures and models.



Hill End Hospital, St. AlbansThe Art Therapy Department 1966

The Department has a complete identity of its own and its own separate corridor; there is the feeling of being away from the hospital. The studio is a huge room, giving the impression of the almost aristocratic elegance of a stately home. The large windows provide views of the beautiful grounds.

There were still-life groups, arrangements such as pottery, fruit, bottles and magnificent arum lilies; a range of books to stimulate interest and work by the patients displayed on the walls.

The patients may work at easels, choosing alcoves if they wish to be alone, with scope to arrange their own subjects. With an average of twelve people using the room at any one time there is little fear of over-crowding.

The studio is open every day, and one senses an immediate welcoming atmosphere, it may be described as calm and peaceful, yet also stimulating. This must be very important for the patients and of great therapeutic value.

There was an approach to the individual patient by the art therapist, encouraging the natural unfolding of artistic ability, combined with the exploration of personality problems.

The Work done by Patients

The pictures by four patients were studied, and three are considered here. The medical histories have been supplied by the consultant concerned.

Mr. C "This man is a psychopathic Irishman, who has been addicted to alcohol, is irregularly employed, repeatedly in prison, and is sexually promiscuous, addicted to Amphetamin. He has, however, a degree of charm and plausibility.

He has been in hospital on a number of occasions, and





The Crucifixion



received aversion treatment for his alcoholism. Nothing is known of him since 1963."

The picture from this patient is an oil painting. The religious message conveyed by the Crucifixion is represented in a powerful, haunting and original way. The large head seems to suggest both a Universal symbol of The Christ, and also a personal symbol of the inner Christ - the self. It is made from part of the cross and yet the style is almost cubist. The eyes have an expression of suffering, but also of profound awareness. The hands are painted with great sensitivity. The small figures and the shadows are beautiful. There is blood, fire and a heart. The cross is shown in many positions, and it is used very skillfully from the point of view of the whole composition. There is a wonderful feeling of depth, it seems to have visual and also poetical meaning. The colour is very subtle and personal.

Mr. H "This patient has been suffering from a chronic schizophrenic illness for about ten years. His symptoms have fluctuated, sometimes he has been grossly deluded, and at other times has had a partial remission. He has had delusions, for example, that he had powers to rule the world, at times that he was fearful that he was subject to attack from some mystical source, and refused to go out of doors.

He has been regarded as a potential danger by some psychiatrists, including a danger to his parents. This is completely quiescent at the moment, and he is working for a firm as a structural design draughtsman."

Two pictures are included from this patient: The hand seems to suggest strength of character and drive, but the background is like a barricade. He obviously has the ability to express







240 b



Dream Picture



feeling in a direct way in visual terms.

The other picture is a rapid sketch in charcoal. It conveys vividly the schizophrenic fear of being attacked from all sides. From the artistic point of view it is outstanding in its degree of power, movement and simplicity.

Mr. T "This is a young man who was in this hospital on several occasions, the last time being in 1965. He is recorded as a personality disorder. He could at times be very plausible and pleasant, but at other times was disturbed emotionally, having feelings of unhappiness and bitterness. He was very often unable to face obligations and persons, becoming very anxious and agitated. He appeared to show a good deal of aggression at times, and needed tranquillisation. He was recommended for an Industrial Rehabilitation Unit."

The painting by this patient included here is like a dream picture. It is a work of outstanding originality and visual impact. The black and white sketch shown below was done by the same person, evidently when he was in a less tranquil mood.





10/3/78

Here again, the beautiful grounds, with the stately trees;  
the endless corridors and the wonderful display of creative art  
by the patients - sometimes relieving, sometimes reinforcing the  
sense of terror - and finally the Art Therapy Department. A  
patient has expressed what it means:

"The Art Therapy Room"

No-one would suspect  
That the door at the end of that bare corridor  
Would lead to such serenity.  
Bruised minds, starved spirits, despairing thoughts  
Are soothed and comforted  
By an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.  
A sense of purpose and preoccupation  
Guides the hands of those who handle  
Pencil, brush or pastel.  
Every colour of the spectrum  
Glow from the table surfaces,  
Or hangs, mounted, on the walls.  
Through that creative process  
And a sense of brotherhood  
This oasis of calm and colour  
Will be remembered  
Long after  
Life outside  
Claims  
Its own  
Again."     3

L.W.

A different therapist states her approach:

"In the large area of our art therapy department we try to  
maintain a quality of quiet in which an individual with support  
and encouragement is able to explore the powerful field of  
subjective emotion through the media of paint, clay and poetry.  
All work whether subjective or otherwise is considered valuable



as an expression of the person's state of mind at that time."

Myra Cohen

On this visit there were about ten patients engrossed in their expressions. On display were many striking and imaginative pictures, sometimes with related poetical themes.

There were abstract colour fantasies, a sun, a golden eye, a mirage, a mandala, dragon flies, sun flowers and faces. A man on a bike gave a warning about being in too much of a hurry. Moon Footprints carried the comment: "If man can scar the moon with footprints and be so significant - why not on this earth?.." A strange withered brown hand reached out to say: "Don't you understand, I'm dead, you are wasting your time on me." But the sensitive way it was painted belied the statement.

One picture was called "This is the Path to the Light", and another "The Self" showing spectrum patterns, symbolically in three layers. There was a tree with striped ties, instead of leaves and an egg-head with crosses for eyes, not unlike Dali. There was an attempt at racial harmony by means of two abstract figures, one orange and white on a black ground, the other the opposite. Perhaps the strangest picture of all was the one of skeletons, a skeleton emerging from a graveyard, holding a dog on a lead skeleton in one hand and, with a delightful sense of incongruity, an umbrella in the other. It was called "The Resurrection", but it was not easy to decide whether it was intended to be macabre or amusing.

To the question: Does art provide liberation and release? The art therapist replied with an emphatic 'Yes, the process is self-healing as the patient paints his own feelings and then discovers the meaning."

A series by one patient, showed how at first he was withdrawn





1.



2.

Diane



3.

1. White Horse. 2. The Large Bird. 3. The Fight.



and afraid. His art lacked the confidence of a positive statement. He drew insect-like people and wrote: "The way people looked and stared they seemed frightened - half insect - and frightening towards me."

He painted the outside world in sombre tones and even the roses were black; but the art therapy room glowed with colour. He wrote: "Black outside, the roses did n't seem red I just painted them as I felt them to be, but the art room felt secure in."

Symbolically, he painted a man within a man and felt that he was trying to push him apart.

This patient depicted himself being attacked by drawing 'mind-flies' pecking away at his head.

When he felt very depressed he painted himself in an eye-shaped boat with arms outstretched. He wrote: "He's escaping - he's had enough - he does n't like it."

Towards the end of a two month period in the hospital the pictures became more cheerful. He drew the mind-flies leaving their abode in his head. Some were travelling along ladders and others were playing games on their way out.

He drew a man within a man within a man within a man. He said: "The one in the centre is the man himself and the others are parts of him bigger."

A patient called Diane had done a series of pictures of birds, flying horses and lions. Against one of the bird pictures she had written: "Bird flying - Let my feelings fly." One of the horse pictures was entitled: "Raving Lunatic". Her work seemed spontaneous and very lively and three examples are included.



From the information kindly supplied by Diane's consultant, Diane was born in 1947. She was adopted and has been in residential care since the age of nine years. "During her teenage time she had a repeated pattern of stealing, persistent bed-wetting and most disturbing episodes when she swallowed various foreign bodies, usually needles and pins. There has been a slight improvement recently. She has been diagnosed as a severe personality disorder case, although there have been occasions when the query of schizophrenia has been raised and the subject discussed. Her prognosis is poor regarding her leaving the hospital. Her behaviour is still most inadequate."

The situation has to be faced that not every patient is going to emerge 'cured' after six weeks or so in a psychiatric hospital. However, for a long-term patient the opportunity for art therapy and the support of the department may be important. At the very least it offers a humane and caring way of making a prolonged and difficult experience more bearable or perhaps less frightening. At the best it offers a positive theme that may be placed against or interwoven with the negative one.



Netherne Hospital, Coulsdon, Surrey

Netherne appointed an art therapist, E. Adamson, in 1946. From 1948 he worked full-time in the hospital. He was previously a commercial artist and lecturer in sanatoria and mental hospitals. In the early days he was known simply as "the artist". He was only interested in the paintings from the artistic angle. The work went to the psychiatrists for diagnosis and he tried not to become involved with this.

As time went by he may have found it difficult to cut the patients into artistic and psychological halves.

The studio was a modified army hut. Twenty patients a day may paint, chosen by psychiatrists, the activity being a part of the treatment.

Poster paints were provided in eleven colours, two brushes and a standard size of paper to aid classification. No other limitations were imposed. No suggestions were made with regard to subject, construction, form or colour. The guidance from the art therapist must have been almost purely technical.

Adamson said of the paintings: "They often have a rare incidental quality of beauty. The magical properties of painting allow the patient to live vicariously on his paper. He may build, destroy, create and even murder or love through the medium of his painting.

Thus, it can give great satisfaction and prove a harmless outlet for dangerous frustrations. Art has for many years been recognised as a healing medicine. It is synonymous with harmony, balance and beauty, and thus exposes the painter to a beneficial radiation."

He described his role as an artist to encourage and stimulate the patients and act as a catalyst in the expression of



their ideas.

All external influences are kept to a minimum. It might be thought that the patients would influence each other. They apparently take no interest in the work done by others; they enter the studio, paint a picture and then leave.

As soon as the paintings are finished,,they are taken to the psychiatrists for analysis. The patients are asked for their interpretation, after this they do not see the work again. The paintings are filed, nothing is destroyed.

Sometimes, certain patients may have the opportunity to work in oils, or pen and ink; or they may attend the studio to write poetry.

In the early 1950's, when E.C. Dax was the Medical Superintendent at Netherne, he made a study of 20,000 pictures. He studied the ways in which art may be helpful to patients:

As a pleasing hobby and to give satisfaction.

To provide emotional release.

As an aid to diagnosis, treatment and even prognosis.

(Paintings have been used to give warning of possible suicide or other crises.)

As an adjunct to psychotherapy - the paintings may be used like dreams for interpretation of symbolic meaning.

As progress charts.

Dax arranged a series of experimental studies. He describes one of these experiments in synaesthesia: He says that the experiment took six afternoons, with four records each time. The patients were not specially selected, the ones using the studio were used. The patients painted to music, in order that their emotional responses could be studied.

Out of 17 patients painting to Mendelssohn's Overture



Midsummer Night's Dream, there were 13 crises; including war scenes, murder, suicide, storms, robberies, black clouds over the sun, dragon flies burning their wings in a fire and a black figure with angels.

Mahler's Fifth Symphony produced 13 out of 20 depressive paintings, including five burials and a cremation.

It was found that the music played had a significant influence on mood, and depression or elation could be evoked by it. 4

There have also been some experiments of group work. The idea was to encourage certain types of difficult patients to experience some satisfaction through working together on a project. About eight people would work on a huge canvas. It was found that, although these patients did not get on well with each other on the wards, while they were cutting out animals for "The Ark", or painting figures for "The Christmas Party", they were friendly.

It would seem that the use of the artistic project may provide an excellent form of group therapy.

#### A Visit to Netherne 1966

On this visit it was possible to discuss the work with Edward Adamson; to see some of the paintings in the gallery - the only one in the country devoted exclusively to schizophrenic art - and to enjoy a tour of those aspects of the hospital that were relevant to the subject.

It was only possible to have a glimpse of the patients at work in the studio, as visitors are discouraged from entering when work is in progress. However, there were other things to see: In the hospital grounds there were a number of round shelters, and these had been modified for modelling, pottery



and wood carving.

Perhaps the most interesting of all the work at Netherne is the relief sculpture in the chapel depicting 'The Twelve Stations of the Cross'. In the piece symbolising suffering there is the figure of Christ and a group of people representing humanity. In the Crucifixion there is no detail, only the rhythmical movement of figures blending into the cross. The work is extremely sensitive and expressed with true simplicity of style.

A few years after this visit Dr. M. Betensky visited Netherne and had this to say about the sculpture:

Dr. M. Betensky's Visit to the Chapel

Dr. Betensky described the sculpture as an extraordinary series of large plaster reliefs: "This was the fruit of a religious experience communicated to the art therapist by a schizophrenic woman not previously trained in art. The rectangular panels, beautifully mounted by Mr Adamson, were powerfully expressive and moving. So strong was the emotional experience of the patient that she had no difficulty in overcoming problems of artistic organisation and technique. The naively conceived scenes were an expression, a solution and a communication all at once. Perhaps by virtue of its simplicity and directness, the series is one of the rare creations of a patient that speaks to a wide audience." 5

Dr. Betensky uses art therapy herself in her private practice of psychotherapy in Washington D.C.

NB Dr Betensky describes Netherne as probably having the largest collection of psychiatric art in the world.



Springfield Hospital, LondonThe Art Therapy Department 1966

At the time of this visit the hospital had had an art therapist for twelve years, he was a professional artist, a clinical psychologist and a university lecturer.

He said: "As a basic premise I believe that art therapy can be beneficial to any kind of patient whatsoever. It is an immediately accessible activity, presenting a minimum of physical and intellectual obstacles to the achievement of an end-product, where the gap between volition and act can be reduced as far as is humanly possible. This kind of immediacy appealed to me principally as a way of approach to chronic patients who present perhaps the most conspicuous problem in psychiatric hospitals."<sup>6</sup>

Any patients particularly interested in art have the opportunity to paint; but the emphasis is placed on the chronic schizophrenics. All the most regressed and demented patients, all those that everybody else had rejected, were encouraged to attend the Department. It was felt that painting and drawing were the only means of communication left for such people. This was a way for the withdrawn to reidentify themselves.

At the time of the visit there were about fifteen patients painting. They worked in an independent way, a truly permissive atmosphere having been achieved. One patient asked if she might give a piece of paper to another patient who was n't doing anything. The art therapist said that she should be left alone, if she was not painting it was because she did not want to, and that was all there was to it.

It cannot be too strongly stated, that the creation of the permissive atmosphere is one of the most important contributions an art therapist can make. The therapeutic atmosphere in the art



department gives relief to patients weighed down with the regulations and prohibitions of society. It may also give relief from the controlling influences of the rest of the hospital.

Freedom has been found to be especially important with regard to paranoid patients. The feelings of persecution from which many of these people suffer may be reduced by the 'take it or leave it' attitude. Certainly, all actions and reactions, imagined reactions and possible reactions, are viewed with suspicion by many of these patients. It is therefore necessary to avoid taking the first step, and to react as unobtrusively as possible.

The patients are not told what their pictures mean, this would be considered a wrong approach. They are asked to discuss their work and express their own feelings about it.

During the course of the morning a psychiatrist visited the department. This is a regular procedure, and enables the art therapist the opportunity to discuss the patients and their art. Importance is attached to the diagnostic aspect of the paintings at Springfield.

In the opinion of the art therapist, during the course of twelve years, he felt that he had been able to give considerable help to many people through art. For a few patients he thought that art therapy was probably the most important part of the treatment.

#### The Period Between Visits

Shortly after this visit Springfield had a new art therapist and he left shortly before the second visit. However, something of his interesting philosophy may be gathered from the following comments in an exhibition catalogue:

"The art therapy department in a psychiatric hospital is often



an asylum within an asylum. That is to say it is a refuge from the depersonalising manoeuvres of a large institution and its agents.

It also provides people with space to express inconvenient or unspeakable feelings. The relationship between an art therapist and the hospital that employs him is often abrasive. It can scarcely be otherwise since it often happens that people paint their best pictures when they are most 'ill' and the pictures often get worse as a person gets 'better'. This paradox is central to art therapy." 7

Robin Holton

7/3/78

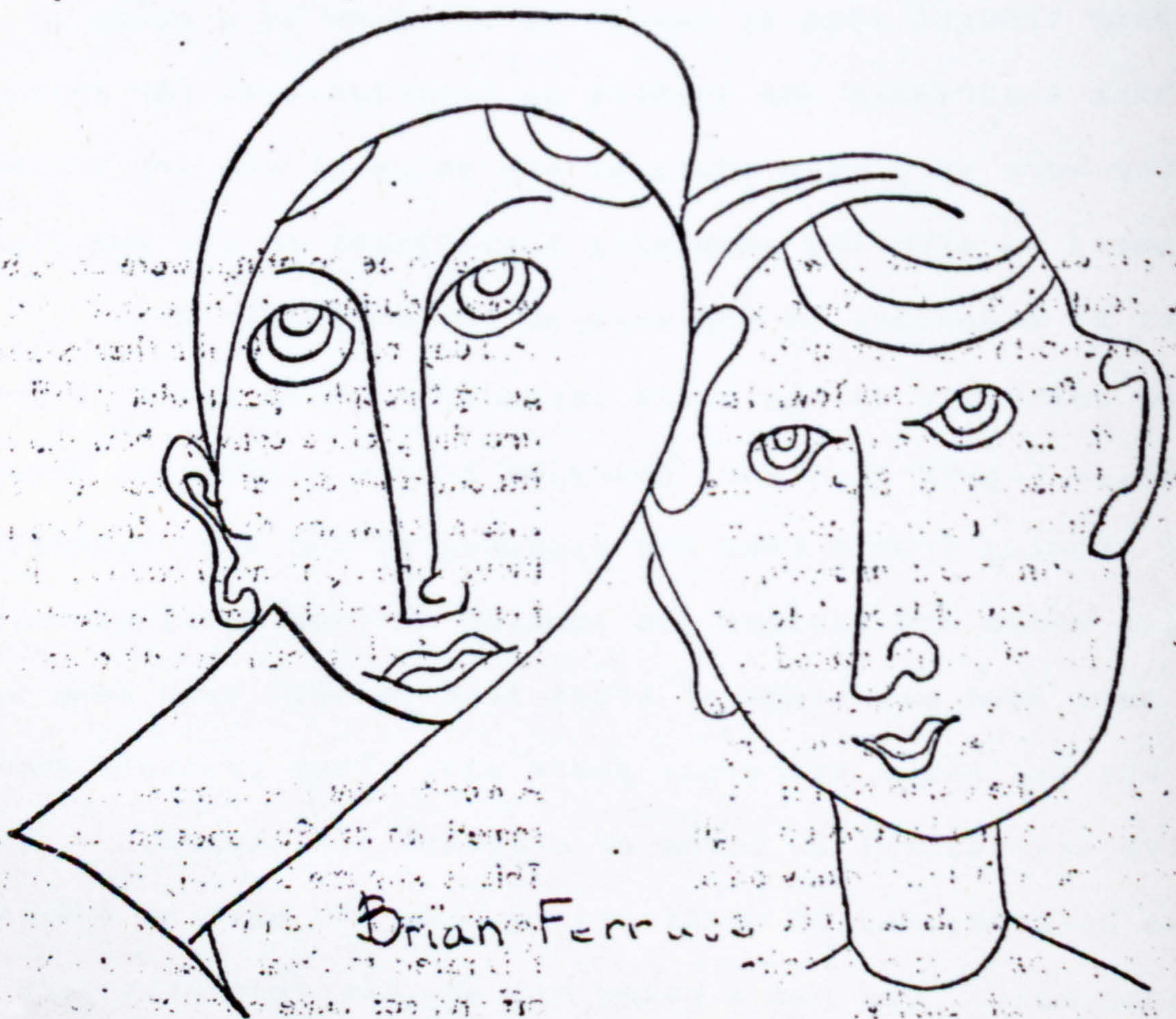
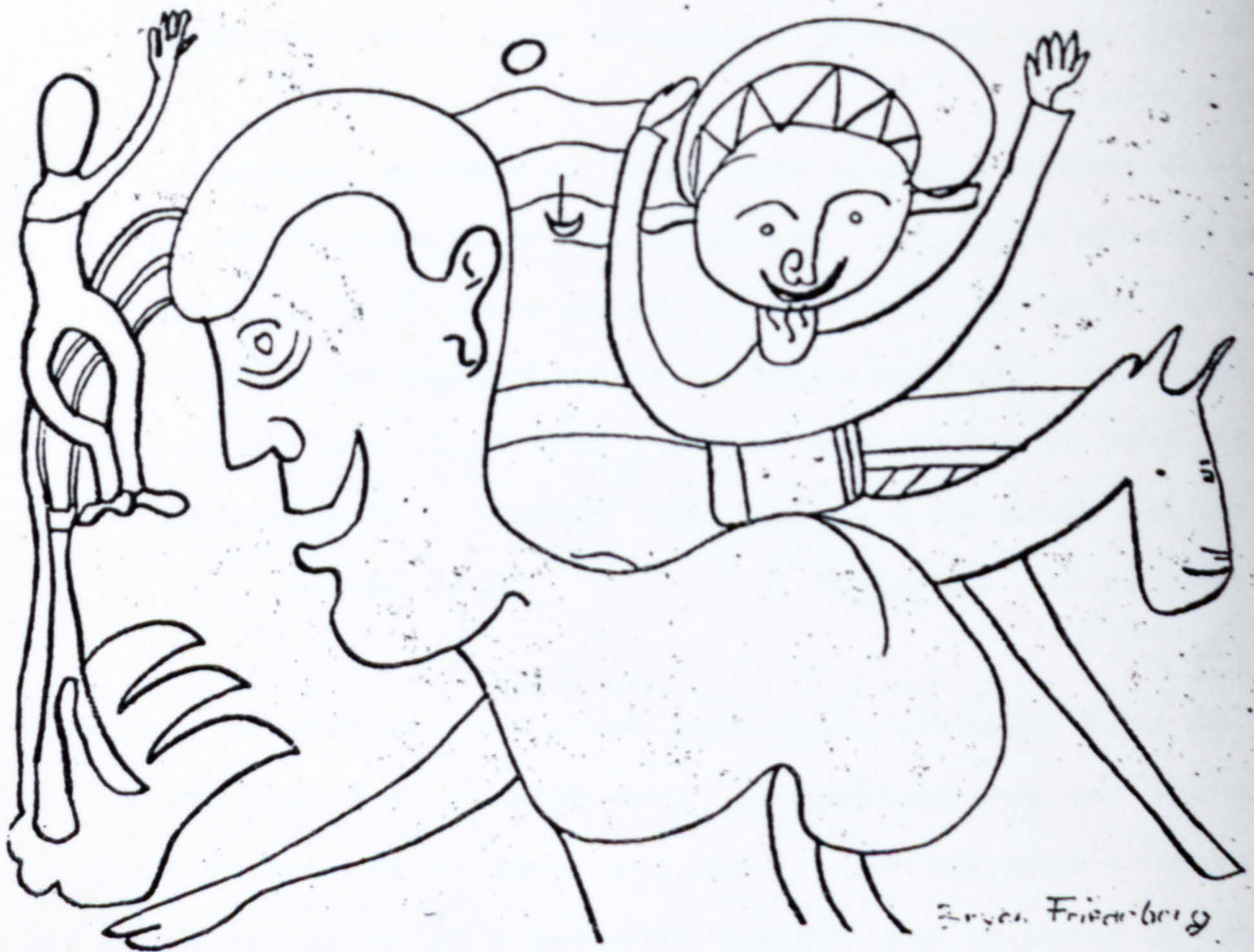
On this occasion there were about ten patients in the department and two art therapists. (one attends on 4 days per wk. the other on 2 days per wk.) They said that it was not possible to think in terms of art therapy offering a cure; it may do so but proof would be difficult as many factors are involved. However, they both thought that it should be accepted as a means of enriching experience and opening up opportunities for expression.

They were very much aware of the value of the art therapy department as offering something significant in its own right, and not as secondary to the work of the psychiatrists.

The paintings on the walls included a green field, a path to the sun, a figure of a girl emerging from a large root vegetable, a tree growing from a head and pictures of the supernatural with symbolic wings and skulls. On looking through previous work, there were some paintings of trees said to have been done by a woman who had had a leucotomy years ago. They probably showed a negative development in terms of creative limitation.

Two patients may be mentioned in order to give an idea of the department: One was a young man who had been attending for







several years. He had a pile of paintings and was at first somewhat reluctant to show them. He placed a number of records on the top, He said that if the pictures were seen the records might get broken in the process of moving them. Later he moved the records himself. Many of his paintings were of an abstract type, and often followed variations on a theme. For example, there were city streets - as if seen from the air - the roads and traffic signs seemed to convey the feeling of a maze with many 'no go' areas. Likewise the patterns inspired by the London Underground with their appropriate symbols offering exciting 'Op Art' possibilities.

The other patient was called Brian. He was a middle aged man who had been at Springfield since his teenage years. His immense pile of pictures were signed, but the name varied. He said: "They are of course all by the same person". They were very lively scenes of farm animals, trains, crowds, fairgrounds and one especially humorous one entitled: "Fun O'Boy". Brian said that he had previously worked in Fleet Street. He also spoke of having visited a farm when he was seven years old, and of really being a duke with large estates. He took a delight in talking about his work and said that he believed the Tate Gallery would like to possess it. He was a very good conversationalist and somehow his contradictory information sounded convincing. It was as if Truth existed as alternative themes, rather than following one rigid, factual line.



At Warlingham Park Hospital, both staff and patients have found, in the art department, a greater freedom than they had ever known.

The art therapist said: "As a result of mental illness, the patient may become isolated, he may feel that he has lost himself and experience a frightening sense of unreality".

She expressed the view that through painting the patient may regain his sense of identity. "To make a painting is to create a new area of experience, to extend the boundaries of the self, to explore the possibilities of future development. In my work I aim to get people to feel and see and enjoy what they are in terms of what they create".

#### A Patient at Warlingham Park

The patient was a woman of 43 years of age and formerly a nursing sister.

The mother deserted the family when the patient was a child. She was subsequently brought up in a children's home. At the age of 16 she left to go into domestic service, which she hated.

Later she took up mental nursing and general nursing. Eventually, she became sister-in-charge of a surgical ward. She was very efficient, but her relationships with people were superficial. She gradually became socially isolated and very depressed. She finally broke down, becoming periodically aggressive and showing marked paranoid characteristics.

The patient used the art department as a place where she could carry out her aggressive and destructive wishes in a safe environment. She often expressed the desire to paint, but she could only use the paint as a vehicle for her aggression.



Warlingham Park



The patient's first landscape in oils





It took some time for her to understand that painting a picture was not a matter of fabricating a pretty object, at the expense of her true feelings. Gradually, she saw that her feelings could be channelled in a constructive way to make a painting. The purpose of the art therapy for this patient was to help her to find a satisfactory outlet for her feelings and then to build her confidence in her ability to deal with them.

The paintings suggest a rather threatening and uncertain world. It is interesting to note that her first landscape in oils is more exciting and original than her later work. The mountains have receded and she is achieving a sense of space. Perhaps she is getting better in psychiatric language, but something has been lost in the process. From looking at the paintings, it is not merely something negative and destructive; but a sense of power, awareness of drama, vitality and drive.



## The Art Department at Warlingham Park

The Department forms a separate unit within the hospital grounds. It is a modern building of imaginative design. On one side a glass 'wall' provides a view of the gardens. Leading on from the entrance hall is a spacious and exciting studio. The patients may work at easels, either sitting or standing as they prefer, with individual tables for their materials. There is a luxurious supply of art materials on open shelves running the length of the studio. During the course of a week there may be as many as one hundred people using the room. There is an office for the art therapists, a large store-room and a fine exhibition room with scope for the display of fifty full scale pictures and sculpture.

At Warlingham Park: "What would you like to do this afternoon?" is the kind of question a patient is likely to receive on entering the studio. The question of interest in this thesis is does this individual method encourage creativity? It would seem, that given certain conditions, it does. The main supporting conditions are the sympathetic attitude of the therapist and a surrounding 'sea' of creative activity. Nobody enjoys the kind of free choice that arises merely from indifference, and it would not be much use asking a client what he wanted to do if the room was full of people copying from pictures. Only a highly original and determined person could transcend this type of situation and the effort involved would be a drain on his energy.



Barnsley Hall









Barnsley Hall, Bromsgrove

Sometimes a patient may discover a latent talent, and find satisfaction in artistic work of high imaginative quality. One person at Barnsley Hall may be taken as an example. He was a dentist. He did not respond to any of the orthodox types of physical treatment. The influence of art on his condition was amazing. The psychiatrist even went so far as to say that this was the significant factor leading to his cure.

At first he produced figure drawings, technically good, but not exciting. He was encouraged to paint, using very large paper, the result was explosive. He painted with intense awareness, energy and confidence. He was given the opportunity to spend extra time in the art room.

An example of his free work included here is suggestive of a fire storm or some cosmic catastrophe. The red forms are very interesting in their organisation over the picture as a whole. The dragon-like shape is moving at high speed from right to left, and the other red shapes are moving dramatically in other directions.

The other painting may well be called "The Dentist's Nightmare". The original picture was 30" by 20" with over 40 whirling drill wheels! Perhaps this was his way of recovering from an unbearable task-orientated situation. Sometimes the rat race is so full of stress that illness equated with free time is the only road to sanity.

Perhaps one of the most impressive pictures produced by this patient was the head of an animal with magnificent antlers. On the end of each point there was a beautiful, coiled shell in glowing shades of red and turquoise. The most delightful piece of incongruity it is possible to imagine!



Rainhill Hospital nr. Liverpool 1966

At Rainhill Hospital the Education Officer said that there were many difficulties for people organising art or other cultural activities in a hospital of this type. Many of the wards were still locked, there were over 80 with 30 patients to a ward, and the emphasis was placed on physical methods of treatment. The general impression is of high walls, vast grounds and endless corridors - in fact one of the largest psychiatric hospitals in the country. Nevertheless, in one of the buildings there is a large hall for concerts and exhibitions, a fine library and a room which may be used for games, music or art. The opportunity is provided for individuals showing special interest. The work displayed in the room gave a good idea of the time that must have been devoted to these patients.

One series in particular was superb. The colours glowed and vibrated, the style was very personal and the subject matter dramatic. One was left with a feeling of a person standing on the edge of a rugged cliff and contemplating a world bathed in ethereal light. The Education Officer said that this patient had done some of the paintings a year ago, and that he had now regressed. He said that if someone had given him support and tried to understand him earlier he might have been alright.

He thought that there was a tendency for an over-emphasis to be placed on physical methods of treatment, probably because many people feel safer with things they can measure. Art, on the other hand, being beyond measurement. He was also an analyst, and speaking from that angle, he said that he thought art was useful as an emotional outlet, for inspirational reasons, as an aid to diagnosis and as an alternative - or supplement - to conversation in psychotherapy.



### Middlewood Hospital, Sheffield

In 1965 the following information was received from this hospital in response to a questionnaire: Middlewood is a large psychiatric hospital with over 2,000 patients. The art department holds ten sessions per week, averaging twenty patients per session. The department is organised by the head occupational therapist. There are also crafts, play-readings, discussions and musical and social activities. The educational activities have been found helpful, but shortage of all grades of staff and inadequate salaries for art therapists inhibits progress.

Now, in 1979, there are two qualified art therapists. The problem centres around the relationship between art and occupational therapy. Middlewood has over sixty occupational therapists, mostly untrained. The head of this department sees his function as one of overall responsibility, whereas the art therapists wish to operate autonomously.

### Meeting at Middlewood

30/3/79

One aspect of this small regional meeting of art therapists was a fairly informal discussion of work and methods. An art therapist who came from an adolescent unit in York said that she used art in a variety of ways - spontaneous free-expression, structured group painting of a theme followed by discussion, intensive individual methods sometimes linked with psychotherapy. An art therapist from another Sheffield hospital said he had up to 14 patients, aged 16 - 90 yrs. They were short-stay psychiatrics with problems ranging from phobias to schizophrenia. During the few weeks or months they were in the hospital he encouraged them to overcome their blocks to painting. He sometimes suggested topics or projects, discussing developments on an individual basis.

The most disturbing information came from one of the two art



therapists working at Middlewood. She said that she had been given a patient who had tried to swallow a coat hanger. His drawings were direct line sketches, using a black felt tip pen. They were the most explicitly violent that any of the group had seen. One large sheet, for example, was covered with figures. Each figure, pair or group was a separate statement about some aspect of violence to some part of the body, knives were flying everywhere. The question arose as to what would happen to this patient if he was given encouragement to use art to regress deeper into the nature of his problems and their causes. But perhaps as worrying was what would happen to the art therapist if he exploded, and what of the dangers of transference? The therapist was a young girl who had only finished her one year course of training in art therapy in 1978 and had previously studied fine art.

Perhaps a view expressed by Joel Kovel related to the contours of psychotic disorder is of some interest at this point: He says, that in madness, the 'I' falls apart and is shattered:

"And beyond all this is the unnamable sense of dread stirred up by the feeling that, as the self breaks, so will the world itself disintegrate, for to each person the world only exists through the lenses provided by the structure of the self. The replacement of the lost world - the contrast with the transcendent experience, with its sense of universal love, is instructive - is a chaotic swarm of broken-off bits of the self diffused in a sea of hatred. This is the core of psychosis, and though the overall picture is often mixed with more intact elements, it is well to keep this nucleus in mind when thinking of madness." 8



Macclesfield4/4/79Parkside Hospital

One art therapist attending every morning shared an area of a large room with several occupational therapists. They decided as a group, which of the patients sent to the department, were the best suited for art therapy. There was the opportunity for painting, modelling, pottery, model-making and screen-printing. Usually from 3-12 patients attended for art. At the time of the visit, pottery, model house construction, modelling with clay and collage were taking place.

On seeing the folders of work, perhaps Janet may be taken as a good example: She was a woman in her forties who had come in about three years ago. She had been an accountant, but after the death of her parents felt unable to cope, suffering from feelings of stress and insecurity. Her first paintings were highly conventional - the house in garden and swan in pool type of thing. After being given an interesting piece of driftwood, Janet produced an imaginative scene. She used the wood to suggest gnarled trees, placing them on a hill top, well balanced in relation to a brilliant fireball of a sun. She went on to paint more pictures of a bold and exciting character: one in vivid red-purple of the sky and several abstract or symbolic themes. Forms such as leaves tended to be used in threes, two acting as the supports, one on its own distorted in growth. The same subject developed in the modelling and it seemed as if art was providing a release of tension. Janet's work was satisfying artistically as well. A psychiatrist suggested a leucotomy for her condition. Janet accepted his advice, but during the months that she waited for the operation, her art not unnaturally took on a somewhat sinister and fearful character. One painting consisted of hands,



brightly coloured and moving in all directions. It conveyed the feeling of being pushed around. It is comforting to know that this operation is not used so much now. Egaz Moniz, the inventor, received a Nobel Prize, but perhaps more significantly, a bullet through the spine from an ex-patient! The art therapist said that Janet now worked part-time in a garage, but she was anxious about her impulses to set fire to property.

### The Young People's Unit

The art therapist at this Unit said that he used art in the following ways: The expression of feelings which cannot be verbalized; the portrayal of the difficult situation; as a way of building up relationships; sublimation and the sheer joy of creativity as a vital part of personal growth.

At the time of the visit there were five teenage boys in the art therapy studio. One of them, with severe home problems, was in the process of building a house on a raft. He had created a number of models of castles, symbols of retreat. In his drawings castles were defended with modern systems of alarms, but also by hurling rocks and pouring oil. Another boy had painted a black square. He said that the shapes inside were his feelings of being trapped, those outside his wishes to escape. He spoke a similar language to that of the art therapist. It could be that unconscious influences were at work leading to the creating of model therapy pictures. The most dramatic paintings had been done by a violent boy who had left the Unit. They portrayed blue skulls glowing against red and orange backgrounds. They represented to a pathological degree the need to impress.





Edith

A Schizophrenic Landscape



### How Schizophrenic Patients may see Themselves

Monica Reddyhoff is an art therapist now working at Salford and Prestwich hospitals.

It may be interesting to glance back to her earlier experience. In the mid 1950's, for example, before powerful drugs were given to schizophrenics, she had an unusual patient in Dorset. At the beginning of her illness the woman in question painted herself. It was not a bizarre picture, but the mood suggested apprehension and one figure in the background was turned away and the other was threatening. A later picture represented a halfway stage between the familiar and the strange. A third picture, shown opposite, shows something of what it may feel like to live in the schizophrenic world. Again she paints herself, but there are hints of illusions of grandeur in her position and bearing within the landscape. The features have been partly transformed into a rabbit-like form, conveying an Alice in Wonderland type of situation. The plants are strange and there is uncertainty about the little red boats. The flying machine with bicycle-shaped wheels is weird. The sky suggests a summer day, but there is fork lightning, a star and a blue moon as well as a sun. The sun in fact appears to be rising above the lightning. There is a figure two in the sky and perhaps also a figure eight. The horse looks uncertain about progressing further.

Another patient, working in the mid 1960's had painted beautiful seascapes before her illness. Then her art took on an ambiguous nature. Large creatures, part reptile and part striped dog, inspected a fantastic landscape. One rested its chin on a crescent moon and another gazed in wonder at a huge, yellow, honeycombed dome, whilst a third seemed to be making a noise like a vixen. The first two creatures could also be thought of as



sheep-faced and fishy at the same time!

In another picture she showed herself gazing out of a small window, its heavy shutters only partly open. Much of the painting was taken up with a fragmented brick wall. Part of the wall was broken into by a strange plant with a green flower. Shafts of diagonal blue light appeared to come from a blue circle that framed the woman and her 'prison'.

Prinzhorn, in his classic work, "Artistry of the Mentally Ill", says: "We think of the descriptions by many schizophrenics of how eerily changed their surroundings appear to them and how people move like corpses or machines." 9

He wrote of the impression which often recurs when dealing with schizophrenic expression, namely: ".... a certain enjoyment in grotesque distortions of the environment. It is not as though schizophrenics cultivate realistic eidetic images and deliberately disfigure them, as intellectuals like to imagine; the distortions instead result from the renunciation of the simply conceived world as well as from a predominance of grotesque, eidetic images which so dominate conceptual life that normality seems rather pale. We would relate this uninhibited dealing with an autonomous world of forms to the play urge in which we already saw a basic cause of all configuration."

Prinzhorn goes on to ask - as he himself describes it - a profound question: "what and how much of the psyche expresses itself in such an autocratic world of form?" 10



## An Experimental Study Day on Creative Therapy

The following account of an experiential day at the Prestwich Hospital Conference Centre will give some idea of the ways in which art and drama may be linked. Although these methods have a wide application, they are particularly suited to providing creative experiences for psychiatric patients.

### Physical Activity followed by Painting

First a warming up session concerned with a loosening of the body, groups of people touching the ground at a given number of points when the music stops, leaping in the air, communal massage, free movement and relaxation.

This was followed by a brief, spontaneous 'paint how you feel' session.

### Introduction to Psychodrama followed by Painting

For this experiment the group lie down with eyes closed. There follows a description of an imaginary train journey into the past. Individuals alight at a station where they are seven years old. They are asked to bring into mind an object in a room of that period in their lives. What does the object observe of the people, their activities and interactions? The train is brought back to the present. But first do you say good-bye to your seven year old self, or do you bring something of her with you?

This was also followed by an opportunity to paint the mood or experience.

### Gestalt Encounters

The groups are divided into fours with a leader. The leader is given a subject, e.g. 'Making a Decision'. She does not tell the others, but paints the subject at the top left of a large sheet. The second person paints the message received from this painting at the bottom left. The third person paints her feelings



regarding the apparent meaning of the second painting. Finally, the fourth person likewise responds to the third picture.

Afterwards a verbal interaction follows the process through in reverse.

#### Further Encounters in Groups of Seven

a) The individual seeks isolation, sitting apart with eyes closed for a while. This experience is followed by painting the feeling on a large sheet of paper, with the other six group members doing the same.

b) Now if the individual wishes she may seek contact with the larger group for a short time. Then this experience is again followed by painting the mood with the six other people.

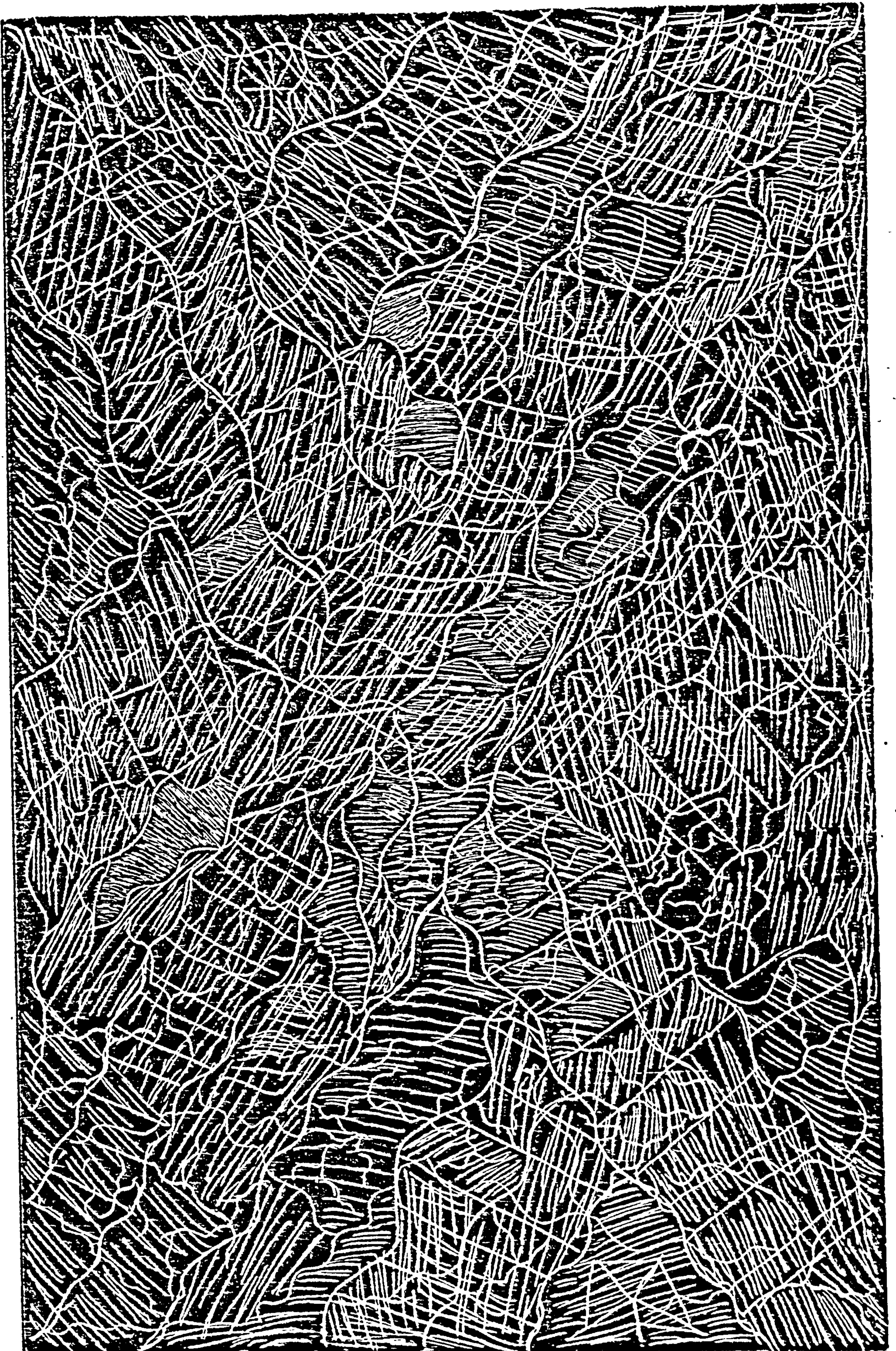
c) Finally the large group are encouraged to hold hands, move around to the music, get all tangled up and then untangled. This feeling is then transferred to paint on a sheet of paper with the group of six as before.

#### The Value of the Non-Verbal Creative Therapies

Although anybody may enjoy these activities, it can be seen that for psychiatric patients with blocks and communication problems they are of special importance.



Following Electrical Treatment



Kathleen



## Personal Experience using Art Therapy with Psychiatric Patients

My first experience of using art with psychiatric patients was in 1962. Prior to that my interest had been art in relation to modern trends in child psychology. I had seen something of the value of creative activity with reference to the growth, emotional development and integration of the child personality. The work with the patients seemed a natural extension of this. E.M. Lyddiatt, who has been the art therapist at Halliwick Hospital, London, says: "At times it will be infuriating, bewildering, surprising, frightening, nevertheless, those who persist find it rewarding." This, on the whole, has been my experience.

### The Patients and their Problems

The people coming to the art groups have included an amazing variety of types. There have been people from all walks of life, for example, an art lecturer, a retired army officer, a chemist and an engineer. There have been people with a wide range of compulsive tendencies, including shoplifting, drug addiction, attempted suicide and pyromania. People with mood swings and all manner of fears and phobias.

Whatever the basic problem may be, there is often something in the environment of the patient to provide the breaking point. It could be physical illness, worry about work, an accident, the loss of a relative or marital difficulties.

Perhaps the best way to convey the feeling of the problems would be to quote from the patients themselves:

"I have never been able to talk in a group, I always shut myself away.

The family have no sympathy and do not like mental illness.

I have nothing to live for now that the children are grown up.

Teenage pop music is unbearable!



Previously I was easy-going, now everybody irritates me. I am always in a state of panic, I imagine everybody is watching me.

Nobody understands me.

I feel as if I am always in the dentist's waiting-room.

I have no confidence in myself.

I just accept everything. I cannot make the effort to challenge, even when people take advantage. I simply go under and cannot rise again.

I find there is no point in making the effort to dress.

I have always attended the department by taxi. I could not face the thought of travelling on a bus.

I've had enough! physical illness for three years, family relationships broken down, no peace, pop music all the time. I don't want to work - my idea of a good time is lying in bed all day."

Some patients did not want to speak for a whole hour. Those that did tended to want to talk about their own symptoms, rather than relate to other people in the group.

One of the most distressing characteristics of much mental illness, is the feeling of being alone in the universe. There is the need for methods that are likely to create bridges between individuals.

#### Discussion and Related Methods of Approach

I have had experience with both long-term and short-term patients and also with people in a day department - sometimes with mixtures of these groups at the same time, even with composite groups of patients and W.E.A. students.

A psychiatric group is always changing. Patients may be attending the hospital for a few weeks or for several years. Any programme of educational activities needs to be very flexible.

Discussion is important, but because many patients find speaking in a group painful, it is not an easy method to use. On one occasion asking for written comments about paintings



opened the way. Strong feeling and interest may lie behind silence. A few examples will indicate this:-

Exciting  
Peaceful  
Sombre and depressing  
A feeling of horrible insecurity  
A flight of fancy  
Unified, but I like discord  
Metallic and impersonal  
This troubles me a great deal  
Wonderful  
Absurd, 'total confusion'  
An enigma  
Paradise  
Volcanic and brimming with life  
Delicate feeling  
An adventure in fantasy, mad fantasy and logical fantasy  
I think my mind must be like this!

The discussion progressed from a consideration of the patients' own written comments, to more elaborate opinions regarding the significance of art in understanding past civilisations and artistic expressions in the world to-day.

The therapeutic and educational aspects of this work cannot be entirely separated. If discussion stimulates interest through the exchange of ideas, this is an educational gain, but it is likely to be therapeutic as well.

The informal atmosphere necessary for real discussion provides the opportunity for the breaking down of emotional barriers. Discussion is one of the most important ways of building up relationships and group feeling. It is truly a co-operative venture. It causes people to look at their own arguments and examine the evidence. This may lead to greater flexibility, mutual modification and deeper understanding.

Difficulty in communication is not the only problem in the way of developing discussion, another is depression. If there are twenty patients present, and a number of them are very deeply depressed, this can be felt by the others, many of whom tend towards a passive acceptance of the prevailing mood. My



own function in these circumstances must be to convey the topic of the week with such enthusiasm that the atmosphere of depression is, in some degree, cancelled out. Sometimes this will show itself in spontaneous humour: For example, one member of the group said that a 'Henry Moore' reminded him of his wife!

Topics that have been considered by groups for discussion have included: illusion and reality, creative power, art and science, painting and music and the interpretation of the work of an artist.

Sometimes I have found it helpful to give short lectures to stimulate interest, on subjects such as: Primitive and Ancient Art, Chinese Art, The Basic Elements of Art, Design in Nature, Art in Education, Cubism, Symbolism and Surrealism.

Often a lecture may be followed by discussion, or some form of group involvement. It is always worthwhile to experiment with composite methods.

#### Practical Methods

The main concern, as far as this thesis is concerned, is with the practical work. I have held painting sessions in a variety of rooms. Perhaps one of the most interesting was a library, an amazing round glass building with a tree growing through the centre. In this building, surrounded by books, paintings and strange plants, it was easy to create the right atmosphere for informal group activity.

A feeling of freedom and a warm, friendly attitude are the basic considerations for the teacher/therapist. It is under these conditions that patients are likely to find an emotional outlet and a way of integrating the various aspects of their personality. It is under these conditions that creative work is most likely to emerge. Informality is essential, but there



is no standard approach, standardisation would be the death of art.

In this work I have avoided the critical method, except where the patient himself wanted to be critical. There has often been discussion of the paintings, both individually and between members of the group.

I have sometimes painted myself in order to avoid the disturbing influence of someone standing about watching; and in order to emphasise that the experience of painting may be more important than the product.

Most of the patients have had as much criticism from life as they can take. They often need reassurance to express themselves freely and handle materials experimentally.

The following list gives an indication of some of the themes and subjects that I have found to be helpful:-

1. Large-scale, rhythmical line pictures using flowing brush strokes.
2. Experiments in colour, tone and texture.
3. Compositions using metallic paper or fabrics.
4. Experiments using various media, such as chalk, crayon, wax, pen and ink or scraperboard.
5. Mind or mood pictures to express energy, anger, joy or depression.
6. Spattering compositions using a tooth brush.
7. The exploitation of natural forms, such as shells or leaves, in the development of a design.
8. Natural form studies, for example, a tortoise or a rose.
9. Portraits of group members.
10. Imaginative themes suggested by poetry or dreams.
11. Abstract compositions based on biological diagrams.
12. Painting to music.
13. Outdoor sketching.
14. Group work using 'cut out' shapes.

Sometimes the media alone may provide the stimulation. An example is the making of collages from tissue paper. The impact of seeing overlapping sheets of jade, violet, lavender, gold, crimson and turquoise papers may be exciting. There is much to be said for this technique in educational terms. As the pictures



are built up gradually, in layers, there is scope for obtaining a complete tonal range by veiling. Tearing the paper gives a subtle effect and is also therapeutic. Timid people can experience a feeling of adventure without frustration.

Shells, seaweeds, bones and fabrics may be combined to suggest feelings and moods. 11

Following this idea, a group experimented with shells and fabrics to express their own feelings: One patient used orange and purple materials to suggest "The Symphony of the Planets" and another produced "Winter Wonderland". One of the group was really angry about something and she produced a violent patchwork. An important advantage of this kind of activity is the way it encourages informal discussion and the sharing of materials.

Sometimes the work may be linked with a visit. For example, an invitation to a display of fireworks, followed by designs inspired by the experience; or group activity designing, cutting and arranging 'Zoo' animals, after a day at Belle Vue.

It is very noticeable that psychiatric patients like to choose their own titles for pictures. The following selection will give some idea of their problems and imagination:-

Isolation; New World; Imprisonment; Indecision; Bombardment;  
Crash of a space station  
The carpet fitter's nightmare  
If Christmas was on bonfire night  
A snake strangling a tortoise on Sherlock Holme's cap  
When life grows cold and stiff  
You better laugh while you can!  
Whatever rules we must obey, who or what has right to rule?  
The drunken draught-board  
They call this sorrow  
Store in a hot, wet place  
Cut here (dotted line round a woman's neck)  
Hell - a large eye with red and orange rays.



A Dragon was used as the basis of group work. Eight people made a collage mounted on canvas. It measured six feet across and consisted of pieces of coloured felt decorated with sequins. The same subject was also used for a wall hanging using metallic paper.

All this is a way of using art to bring colour into the lives of the patients during difficult periods.

One of the problems that many of the patients face is the fear of living in the shadow of other people's assessment of their worth. They tend to assume that the often casual and over-confident assertions of others represent some kind of omniscient objectivity.

Very little that anyone can say about another person is really objective. The patients need encouragement to stand on their own feet and evaluate themselves. Art may open the door to a greater degree of psychological freedom. They come to realise that nobody can tell them if a picture is right or wrong, as if it were a mathematical solution. They can only discuss its characteristics, and refer them back to the validity of their own subjective judgement. In this way they come to accept the integrity of their own viewpoint.

From the work with the patients there is the reminder of many unusual and adventurous spirits:

Muriel, according to the psychiatrist, had pseudo-hallucinations and nightmares. The treatment given to her, in the 1960's, included LSD and some of her pictures showed the influence of this very powerful drug. She used violent colours and symbols such as fire, knives and blood. She was fascinated by the dual nature of fire, and also by submergence and drowning themes. Muriel's symbolism was wholly conscious.





Keith

The Magician





Tony

Valiant and Vanquished



Keith also had LSD treatment. He painted figures with masks, flamboyant robes and elaborate head dresses. Often the main figure in his picture looked like a sorceress or magician wielding great power, throwing thunderbolts around or giving electric shocks. In one picture the 'magician' is hurling large, flower-shaped fire forms at a couple of dozen serpents. His colours tend to be vivid and glowing against a black background.

Peter always painted several pictures in the course of an afternoon. He had usually produced three pictures before the group assembled. His pictures were crowded with symbolic forms: A green hand reaching for something beyond its grasp, with Peter written along the arm; large open mouths with sinister teeth, ever watching eyes, serpents, arrows and keys. One painting showed a meditating figure, with the word 'Peace' written nearby and all around dozens of chaotic shapes. Peter worked in an effortless and nonchalant way, making witty remarks as the weird forms emerged. Sometimes he paused to write a poem or hold a philosophical discussion.

Dorothy showed imaginative ability. She later attended my classes at the college and obtained Grade A at 'A' Level Art and went on to Manchester University.

Tony was a practical man. His masterpiece in art was a wood carving of a highly original nature entitled: "Valiant and Vanquished". The three figures in the carving were described by Tony as follows: "This is me pleading for help. This is me feeling imprisoned. This is me - just killed a man". Tony also produced a metal sculpture called "Flight" and a number of small wooden abstract forms.

There were two schizophrenics with the ability to produce amazing pictures out of the unconscious, as it were. They never



needed to ask me for a title. Their pictures emerged as if they were unwinding a ribbon off a spool in their minds.

Isadore, another schizophrenic, was so withdrawn that he hardly ever spoke and his paintings were like Minimal Art. Usually he produced a black line or the outline of a square. However, if there were flowers on the table he responded in terms of basic simplicity to form and colour.

Monica had been suffering from severe depression. She said: "You gave me some scraperboard, and the white line that appeared when I used the cutting tool symbolised for me the first hint of the lifting of the black cloud in my mind."

Monica spoke of the way many of her early designs were rigidly conventional. Then, she said: "I realised that I wanted to move away from formality and experience the free engulfing joy of splashing paint, cutting, twisting clay, tearing paper and creating beauty. I liked to look around for unusual materials for collages. Above all I wanted to set up my own table with my own equipment - and experiment". On one occasion she told me that she had burnt some spaghetti. It had become a collage entitled "Aftermath", referring to a global atomic disaster.

Monica spoke of the healing power of art. She thought that art therapy could help to restore the balance for people suffering from the stresses and strains of everyday living.

Allan had been studying for his Ph.D. in chemistry. He had severe epileptic fits nearly every day, possibly following an accident at football. He attended the Day Department rather than stay on the neurological ward all the time. He needed to be in hospital while various tests were being made. He was given drugs, but eventually offered a brain operation as the only possible



solution. After signing his agreement he had to wait three weeks for a bed. Needless to say this period was something of an ordeal. Allan was glad of art therapy to take his mind off things. I gave him some geometrical instruments and coloured inks, and he produced many complex designs. He had been warned that if the operation was not a complete success he could be paralysed down one side, or his speech could be impaired. The day before his operation he painted the spectrum and helped to decorate the dining-room with rainbows made from tissue paper. He wrote afterwards to say how much he had enjoyed the discussions on art and philosophy. He said he had many happy memories, at the same time conveniently forgetting the more serious events.

(N.B. Reference was made to personal experiences with psychiatric patients - though in less detail - in the M.Ed. dissertation: "Creative Art Education for Adults", 1976, pp.68-74.)

### Three Psychiatric Patients

The following descriptions of three psychiatric patients do not give a clear-cut impression of art therapy offering a complete answer. In the general area of human relationships there are probably few clear-cut and complete answers. In the psychiatric field this is even more apparent. What the descriptions aim to do, is to high-light the complexity of situations encountered and some of the problems that arise. Perhaps the accounts show at least the potentiality of art therapy as a way of opening up avenues for individual enrichment and for self discovery.



David

I met David through conducting an appreciation of art class in 1963 at a psychiatric hospital. He was nineteen years of age.

At the first painting session of the series the group painted autumn leaves David preferred to paint scientific formulae in black with a large brush. Some of these pictures made patterns, rather like Chinese calligraphy. He was very interested in Einstein's equations, and in energy diagrams that he could describe in a most interesting way.

One week David painted a gipsy, followed by a really wild action painting; another week he produced a delightful picture on the theme of 'Flamingo in Flight'.

During these sessions we talked of many things, from music to philosophy, the relationship between colour and sound, and the parallels between creative thinking in art and science.

He had that unusual degree of intellectual curiosity, intense delight in abstract ideas, introspective power and rebellion against established patterns in society, that one associates with the gifted individual.

David was really more interested in science and mathematics than art. However, I discovered a point of contact: When I attempted to justify modern art by saying that as life is an enigma its no use expecting the artist to produce only obvious and rational statements, I was speaking his language. He knew that life was more than logic and his face lit up as if he were electrified.

When I described the dream pictures of the surrealists, this meant something to him. When I spoke of cubism, the way the single view point of the observer disappears, and of the fusion of mass and void, this had a startling significance.



H.G. Baynes, in "The Mythology of the Soul", speaks of the schizophrenic as a daring voyager. He explains that there is a contradiction between the outer aspect and the inner life. Much surrealist painting and poetry is concerned with this. The schizophrenic is fascinated by irrationality and adventure.

David was very sensitive. He said that nobody understood him. But he was often able to appear detached from his personal problems. He would often make entertaining remarks. Sometimes he sounded like a psychiatrist. With reference to one of the patients he remarked that it was going to take more than six weeks to get him sorted out!

For Christmas David made six bottles of raisin wine. There was something very enterprising about him. Unfortunately, he was not always the same. Sometimes he was hostile and would withdraw from the class for several weeks.

At times I felt that free-expression, lively discussion and the sharing of ideas were helping him. At other times it was impossible to reach him. It was as if his feelings were too ambiguous for a relationship to be maintained. It was as if his personality became fragmented, causing bewildering problems of integration and even of identity. Baynes refers to a shadow personality lurking in the unconscious.

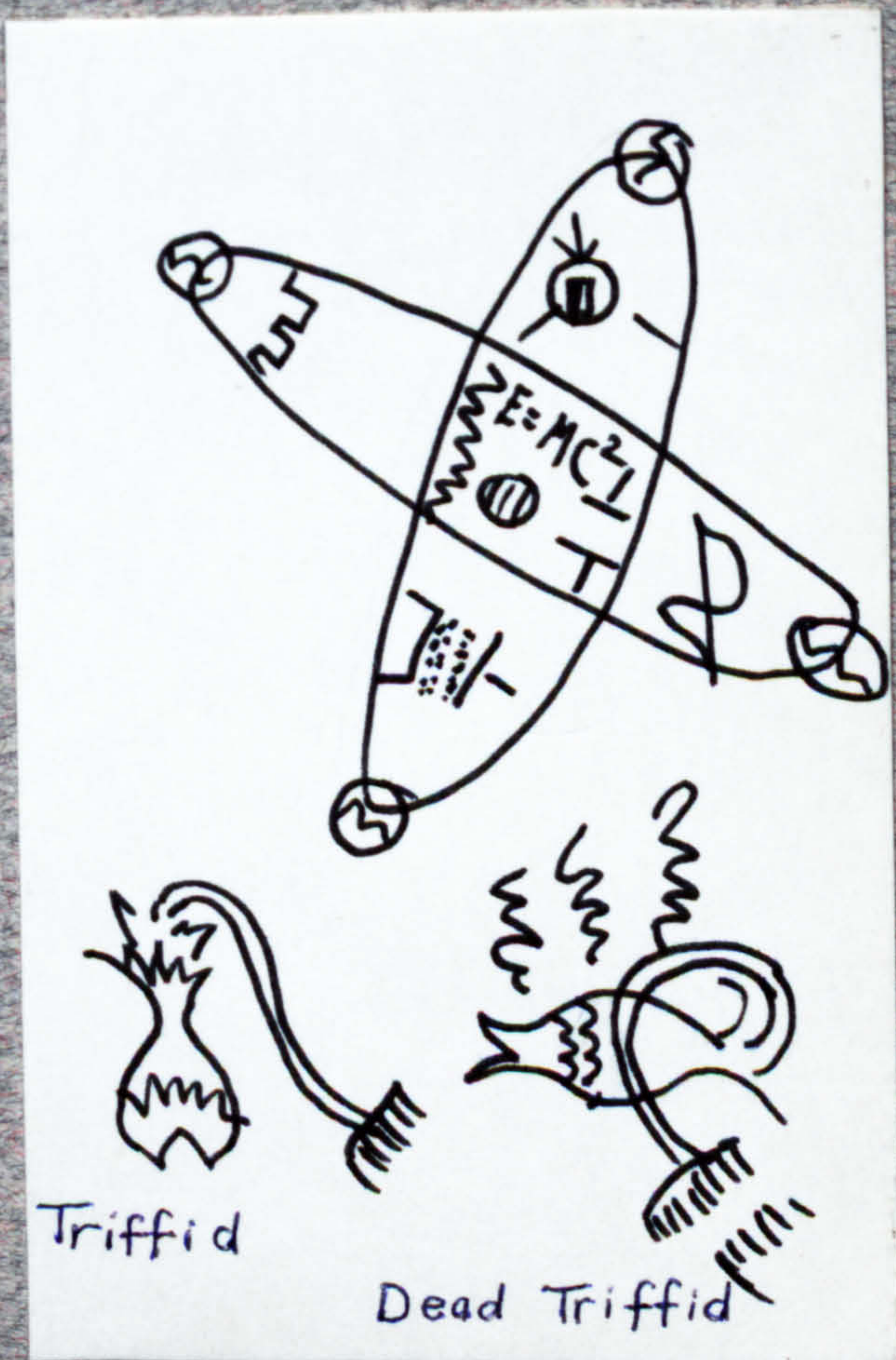
David was discharged in May, after spending a year in the hospital for twice setting fire to a church. Two days after his discharge he set fire to part of his own home. For the second time in his young life he had to face the Assizes for arson.

David returned to the hospital and in the autumn of 1964 he came to the art class again. He was ready to continue the discussion on colour and sound where we had left off months





Black Magic - showing red and white fire





before. He asked a continuous stream of questions on art. The questions were of a deep and complex type; but the flow of thought was so accelerated that only a moment's consideration could be given to each idea. The experience was exhilarating.

This discussion on colour and sound led to experiments in painting to music. David produced "The Shepherd's Song", inspired by the Pastoral Symphony by Beethoven.

Much of his earlier work had been in black, using either charcoal or paint to give a heavy outline. In his later pictures he tended to add bright green or red, and he became fond of gold paint. One of his trees had a gold trunk, and a luxurious mass of green and golden foliage..

David would not have thought of himself as artistic, but when he was in the mood, he could produce the most original pictures and diagrams; apparently, directly from the unconscious, without any hesitation. His rapid style of pictorial expression corresponded to his verbal fluency.

A "Black Magic" picture was produced by David a few weeks before his discharge. He had been in hospital for two years altogether.

On this particular evening there were nine people painting. The topics brought up spontaneously for conversation included: witchcraft, black magic, occultism, hypnotism, telepathy, thought power, electricity, science fiction, madness and genius. During the discussion David painted several diagrams from physics and cosmology and science fiction. He concluded with "Triffid" and "Dead Triffid".\*

\* Reference was made to David in the substantial essay for the Diploma in Adult Education, 1965: 'Adult Educational Activities in Mental Hospitals with particular reference to Art Therapy', pp. 98-103.



Ann

Ann attended a psychiatric day department around 1969/70. She was suffering from depression following the birth of her third child. She came to my art group twice a week and often complained about the situation at home. She wanted a career, as this represented freedom in her mind. Her paintings showed signs of high artistic ability. However, the colours were inclined to be sinister, usually stark purple, black and red. On one occasion she painted what could only be described as a bird of death. Perhaps this picture should have been used prognostically, shortly afterwards she attempted suicide, by taking an overdose of tablets.

After a few weeks Ann recovered and returned to the art group in the summer of 1970. Around this time an art student seeking relief from teacher training and a graduate chemist were also members of the group, and there were many lively discussions.

In the autumn, much to my surprise, Ann arrived at the college. She studied 'O' Level Art with me, she also took a programme of other subjects, such as literature and biology.

Every week she produced an interesting, original painting, well planned and executed with obsessive care. She thought nothing of staying up until three o'clock in the morning in order to enrich her pictures with minute textural details. She was really claiming time for herself, finding herself through the process of painting. Painting may be both an escape and also a liberation - freedom from the world and freedom into another world.

As the weeks went by her folder of work grew thick with representations of plants, animals and landscapes as well as many abstract and fantastic themes. It occurred to me that





Ann Poulton

Green Fire





Ann Poulton

Futility



perhaps the career she so much wanted might be sought in the sphere of art, for Ann was an unusually gifted individual.

Her paintings included an underwater composition, a design evolved from a prawn and an imaginative abstraction entitled: "Green Fire". But these were paintings arising from my suggestions. When left to choose her own subjects Ann produced another strange 'bird on the wing' and a cubist style gymnasium from which the message conveyed was - there is no escape! There was the feeling that within this picture one could leap about, but only within a restricted area.

Perhaps one of her most revealing pictures was the one she called "Futility". She had represented herself curled under and submerged. Above her the strange, sinister, black, wing-like form with oppressive points, all pointing towards herself. A string-like form passes from the far extremity of the 'wing' finishing without an end, as an oval across what Ann described as a couple of waste-baskets. They are symbolic, she said, of all the help you get from society. A rather lively, bright green form near the top of the picture has been three-quarters obliterated by the 'problem' shapes.

In the autumn of 1971 Ann commenced her studies at a teacher-training college, with art as one of her main subjects. She often came to see me, to tell me about her progress, she seemed to be enjoying it. But the happier she was in one area of her life, the more distressed she became about the other side, the home situation. She seemed to be in need of warmth and sympathy; sometimes, though her behaviour seemed puzzling and some of the things she said were contradictory.

Ann survived the first two terms and then she entered a period of deep depression over the Easter holidays.



Apparently, she rang her husband to tell him that she was either going to take her life or leave him, then she said good-bye to the children and went out with her tablets. She was found unconscious and died a few days later.

Here was a case where art had been an enrichment and a stimulation, where it was opening up a whole new world and playing a part in changing a life style. However, at a time when the balance of the mind was disturbed, it seemed as if the way forward was blocked with too many obstacles.

### Joyce

Joyce had been a teacher, she had also undertaken advanced study in education at the university. She had been diagnosed as schizophrenic. She blamed her illness on an accident. One day after staying late at school to work with the children on a play, she was involved in a crash as she travelled home on the bus. Although not physically hurt, the shock appeared to trigger off a mental illness. It would be difficult to know whether this was really so, or just a coincidence.

She found teaching impossible. She described how she wanted to machine gun the children and would throw the 'Macbeth' books at them, telling them to sort the play out for themselves. She seemed to feel that the school and the children were to blame in some way: Because she had stayed late to work with them, so she reasoned, was the cause of the trouble, otherwise she would not have travelled on that ill-fated bus.

When Joyce first attended my art therapy group she was in her early forties and had not taught for several years. However, she was able to live in her own home, she had a good social life and many friends. When she mentioned the accident





Joyce Ashworth

A vulnerable rocky island far out in

A Turbulent Sea



she sounded bitter, but otherwise she seemed able to stand back from her trouble and discuss it philosophically. She attended the art therapy group every Thursday afternoon for about four years. She never missed unless she was ill or away on holiday and we became good friends. Joyce was an interesting blend of characteristics, she was both vivacious and also contemplative. She would often carry on a lively discussion of an intellectual nature; however study was now outside the range of possibilities because concentration was difficult. This she regretted as previously her interests had been academic. Her illness had not robbed her of her sense of humour or confident manner. She rarely showed signs of depression, though she sometimes described having experience of dark moods, especially in the night. The drugs given by the hospital were inclined to make her sleepy. Sometimes she felt it would be interesting to be without them. The nurses and psychiatrists would come face to face with her more aggressive and challenging characteristics and it would be too much for them!

Joyce's art was very interesting, occasionally she would produce a conventional pattern, flower or tree. But usually her work tended to be imaginative, often wild and abstract. Something of the schizophrenic shattering of the personality would come through: Perhaps she might make an exciting collage, selecting violent colours to suggest Hallow'een, or each of the seasons in turn. In this mood she would deliberately leave the edges of the shapes ragged. Her arrangement of shapes seemed like planned chaos - if that is more chaotic than accidental chaos. Bizarre subjects made an appeal: One of her paintings was called "The forty million dead after the French Revolution



in the Catacombs of Paris". I suspected that without the schizophrenic element her art would have been rather flat and uninspired. Here was a person with a basic and underlying personality suggesting orderliness and regularity producing wild pictures. Yet what is a basic and underlying personality? In this field one must enjoy the apparent ambiguities. Perhaps they are the essence of reality at a deeper level.

Unfortunately, Joyce developed cancer and had to have a serious operation followed by radiotherapy. Much of her time was taken up with visiting hospitals and seeing doctors for one reason or another. She seemed better for a couple of years and when I left the hospital she attended my botany classes at the college. Then she began to experience breathing difficulties and died in 1975.

On looking back, the art therapy and the social aspect of the group definitely helped her. She said herself that it helped as much as anything at times of stress and was truly enriching in periods of happiness. Joyce was as perceptive as anyone I have known. She would have been capable of making her own contribution to this research by writing in a most understanding way about the schizophrenic situation. She would have written in a wonderful way, like an explorer faced with obstacles, without the awkwardness that many people feel when confronted with mental illness.



A Summary of the Significance of Art Therapy from Personal  
Experience with Psychiatric Patients

1. Free expression is in itself an enjoyable experience, the aesthetic qualities in paintings may add a further source of satisfaction.
2. Art is a way of emphasising the value of the individual and this helps to overcome the idea of the hospital as an institution.
3. Artists tend to dislike conformity. The art therapist may be the person most likely to establish contact with those types of patients who feel to be in rebellion against society.
4. Painting may be both relaxing and stimulating. It provides a way of relieving both tension and depression.
5. Art as a way of expressing emotion may act as a safety valve.
6. Art may be a form of visual communication. For the withdrawn patient it may be easier than speaking or writing at a certain stage.
7. Working alongside other people in a studio, discussing the paintings in progress and planning exhibitions may help towards the building up of group feeling.
8. Through art a sense of purpose and self-respect may be achieved.
9. Spontaneous painting leads to the expression of previously unconscious feelings. This is helpful in psychotherapy and in understanding the patient's problems.
10. Art may be useful to psychiatrists as an aid to diagnosis and in research. It provides evidence of states of mind in relation to specific phases of an illness.



## Art Therapy and the Psychiatrist

It may be of interest at this stage to consider the opinions of a consultant psychiatrist: In answer to the question What do psychiatrists hope to achieve when they prescribe art for their patients? She said that of course psychiatrists held differing views on the subject. The following comments are a summary of her own ideas regarding the aims of art therapy:

1. The importance of immediateness, directness of expression and achievement. The sense of satisfaction and enhancing positive, creative aspects of the personality.
2. The discovering of latent potential in educational terms; such as learning to see things with interest, as an artist does. "I strongly agree that mental and emotional illness does not preclude or even necessarily limit cultural potential (cultural, including the broadening of vistas in many directions). The awakening of interest in the physical environment, and of interest in general, is a powerful therapeutic agent.
3. Diagnostically, I personally would not assign great value to the patients' paintings. There are many pitfalls here. The productions must always be viewed in context of the total clinical situation and with the patient's comments and associations in mind."
4. Access to unconscious fantasies and themes through their symbolic expression in art:  
 "I suppose this applies in psychotics, schizophrenics having defective concept formation, find it easier to communicate plastically than verbally. But in neurotics, any symbolism in painting is usually conscious - though a patient may say 'It just comes out like that, I don't know why.' Once the



picture is finished, they seem to have a very clear notion of its symbolism and are usually anxious to tell you about it. Therefore, though neurotics often enjoy expressing their state of mind in paint, it is a form of 'acting out', rather than an exploration of their unconscious fantasy. It can therefore be used in therapy as we use other types of acting out - as a starting point for discussion and interpretation. It does not seem to take us any further than do other methods, into uncovering unconscious themes and mental mechanisms of which the patient is unaware.

5. Assessing clinical progress: This is where a patient's productions are useful guides. There may be a change from narrow, confined rigidity towards greater expansion and fluidity; the bolder use of form and colour; the change from stereotypy to adventure and movement. While it would be mistaken to read significance into these developments in isolation, taken in the context of the patient's progress in general, they are useful confirmatory guides. Occasionally, a preoccupation with certain themes, which the patient is not ready to produce verbally, will come out in his paintings and can then be tackled with him. Depressive affect and suicidal thoughts are examples of this."

The views of one or two other psychiatrists may be noted as follows: At Cheadle Royal a psychiatrist explained that a group of student nurses had become impatient after a week in the hospital, because they wanted to see some evidence of 'treatment'. Cheadle Royal is a progressive hospital and the treatment does in fact consist of painting, crafts, concerts and clubs. A psychiatrist at the Tower Hospital, Leicester, wrote: "The key to



treating psychotic patients is the atmosphere of the hospital, i.e. one of freedom, encouragement and a selection of activities." A psychiatrist at Barnsley Hall, Bromsgrove, took a personal interest in the art produced and in arranging exhibitions of the patients' work. He used the art as a way through to a patient: On the wall of his room he had a painting of a tiger in vivid orange, with a contrasting background of re-echoing shades of blue. He said that the woman probably thought of herself as a tiger, and this picture was really a self-portrait. A consultant psychiatrist at the Sunnyside Royal Hospital, Montrose was sufficiently concerned about the importance of the subject to arrange for a four page summary of "Art as Education and Therapy for Adults in Psychiatric Hospitals in Britain" to appear in the hospital magazine. In writing to the editor of the paper the "Sunnyside Chronicle", he wrote: "I wonder if you feel your readers would find this of interest as I did". He said that in his opinion the findings were of considerable interest.



## The Teaching Background of Art Therapy

It may be useful to commence this section with some information from Michael Edwards:

"There are now three centres in Britain which offer full-time training recognised by the British Association of Art Therapists. These are at St. Albans, at Goldsmiths College in London and at Birmingham Polytechnic. All three centres are in Colleges of Art.

At both Goldsmiths and Birmingham, one-year postgraduate programmes leading to qualified art teacher status offer students the opportunity to specialise in the use of art for therapeutic purposes. This can be a main study. The St. Albans specialist course is also for one year, leading to a Diploma in Art Therapy.

There is in addition at Birmingham a Masters course which is available for qualified and experienced art therapists wishing to extend their professional understanding. At St. Albans, Rank Xerox finance a research fellow.

In 1977 the British Association of Art Therapists set up a working party, the first of its kind, to look into full-time training for art therapists. Despite some differences of emphasis between the three centres now offering full-time training, the working party has found general agreement about the outlines of a one-year post-graduate course. In broad terms these include:-

- 1) a desirable minimum of 60 days in a practical situation, under supervision, preferably by an experienced art therapist;
- 2) a directed reading programme and related lecture/seminar series to include developmental psychology, psychoanalytic and related theories, psychiatry, special education for the mentally or physically handicapped or the emotionally disturbed;
- 3) a study programme which similarly covers a comprehensive range of specialist approaches to the use of art media for therapeutic or special educational purposes;



- 4) the extension of students' personal creative work;
- 5) provision for some kind of on-going psychodynamic experience for all students, for example through 'art therapy' orientated workshops or through psychotherapy sessions conducted by a group therapist;
- 6) generous tutorial contact for discussion of individual work problems, bridging between theoretical and practical elements, dealing with course assignments, etc.;
- 7) practice in written work, to include both case studies and some conceptual analysis." 12

Visit to Birmingham Polytechnic, School of Art Education, 29/6/78

From a long discussion with Michael Edwards it was apparent that the art therapy course was making good progress at the School of Art Education in Birmingham. Out of an average of 57 students per year in post-graduate education courses around 8 - 10 were selecting art therapy. Most of them were obtaining work in the field of remedial education or in psychiatric hospitals.

However, it was mutually felt that art therapy was a problem area for a variety of reasons. There was the basic difficulty of the overlapping of so many disciplines. There was the unending dialogue with art educators in general - many of whom were very much aware of their own field as being complex and paradoxical enough. Perhaps most difficult of all were the problems in the hospital situations. Traditional psychiatrists and many hospital staff were inclined to undervalue art; seeing it as merely occupational activity on the one hand, or as the tool of psychotherapy and diagnosis on the other. It was felt that art needs to be understood as something of deep significance in terms of the inner life.

Michael Edwards gave an interesting example of the difference in attitudes: A psychiatrist had just told him how sorry he was for a man who dressed in strange gear and collected rubbish



from the sea-shore. This brought the reaction: "But he could so easily have been one of our Fine Art students!"

On the Master of Philosophy course were two people studying art therapy. Peter Byrne was involved with the catalogue, and was undertaking research related to various aesthetic models of art therapy. John Henzell was concerned with a study of different kinds of madness from the historical point of view. The impression was conveyed of a lively exchange of ideas between these researchers and the people in general art and art education fields.

Goldsmiths' College, University of London, 8/3/78

The post-graduate programmes at Goldsmiths' College allow for a special study group in Art Therapy within the Art Teacher's Certificate course. There are also facilities for about six graduates with teaching qualifications, or experienced art therapists, to undertake a year of individual study in art therapy, or two years of part-time study. There are In Service opportunities for teachers who wish to retrain as art therapists.

During the course of the visit it was possible to discuss the work with Diane Waller, the Lecturer responsible. She said that the students have practical experience in special education, child guidance, remand and assessment centres or psychiatric hospitals. The practice is backed up with a series of seminars, lectures and tutorials. Diane said: "Art therapy is a fairly young discipline and this means that it is still building up its theoretical framework, taking into account work in the related fields of education, psychology, psychiatry, anthropology and the arts."



The general attitude of the students was fundamentally a challenging one as regards their approach towards their future situation. They conveyed a healthy dislike of the more traditional and hierarchical ways of working. They showed some distrust of psychiatry and stressed that it might be well to tread carefully with reference to offering labels to people. They much disliked the most general label in use, that of patient; feeling it to be implicit of an attitude of required passivity inappropriate for mental illness. It was agreed that 'client' would be a better term to apply.

During the afternoon there was a talk from the Art Therapist of the Ingrebourne Centre, Essex. The Centre is a community for people in their late teens to early 50s and is mainly for treating neurotic illnesses. He probably thought that he sounded progressive as he described his role as a facilitator. He spoke of freedom outside the art room as well as inside, of the use of themes, such as the Pied Piper, linking art with drama and music, and of the alternation of verbal and visual approaches. However, he had told the students that you are on your own when you go into the art room. This was immediately challenged: "How do you mean, how can you be on your own when there is a whole group of people?" asked one of the art therapy students. He was also questioned for speaking of patients. They seemed anxious to eliminate all barriers to free and genuine relationships and avoid the 'them' and 'us' type of mentality.



The British Association of Art Therapists      A.G.M. 16/3/79

School of Art Education, Birmingham Polytechnic

As regards the business meeting, the main subject under consideration was the position of art therapists within the National Health Service. The D.H.S.S. had issued a Consultative Document on Art, Music and Drama Therapy, and the B.A.A.T. strongly criticised the clinical and management structure outlined in the document. The central problem revolved around the relationship between art therapy and occupational therapy (with music and drama therapists likely to have similar problems). Probably because occupational therapy departments were often the first to be established in most hospitals, they have traditionally been given a supervisory role. However, the B.A.A.T. are hoping that art therapy will become accepted as a graduate profession with a strong post-graduate core. They naturally question the idea of being part of O.T. Art therapy has a history and character of its own. It is undesirable that it should be diluted and devitalized in the interests of bureaucratic convenience. It is hoped that the situation will eventually be resolved. In some hospitals these problems do not arise. At Barnsley Hall, for example, the Art Therapist said that nurses, occupational and art therapists formed a group and elected a co-ordinator who acted without power. Non-hierarchical models of this kind offer a way of solving the difficulties.

After lunch Michael Edwards, in charge of the art therapy post-graduate courses in Birmingham, gave a talk on six aspects of art therapy: 1. The balance between art and therapy. 2. The diagnostic value and limitations. 3. Clinical skills. 4. The process and the product. 5. Regressive play. and 6. Research.



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## CHAPTER VII

### Creativity and the Individual



## Introduction

This chapter is mainly concerned with three people: Nina Green, Zbigniew Jarzecki and John Cox. They are all clearly differentiated individuals. Nina and Zbigniew (known as Bish) have both found a high degree of creative fulfilment through painting, though they also write and enjoy discussing abstract and philosophical ideas as well. John's special contribution to the creativity saga lies mainly in the area of the spontaneous flow of ideas in conversation and through the written word - though he did paint fairly intensively for one year. Much of what he writes about his experiences and problems could have an application to the visual artist. The final part of the chapter describes the 'Outsider Artists', also very definitely individuals, and the exhibition of their work at the Hayward Gallery.



### Nina Green

Nina attended my Advanced Level Art class at the College of Adult Education from 1972-73. She had previously enjoyed drawing and painting and soon showed herself to be capable of imaginative work. During the year she particularly liked to paint in oils. Her work was not abstract, although she had a tendency to lose unnecessary detail, allowing landscapes to become almost colour-scapes. She also worked on a series of cat studies in crayon and bird themes in scraperboard. "Red Horizon" and "The Secret Valley" were both pictures painted during the year. For the examination Nina had the opportunity to select a title offering scope for her atmospheric feeling, namely, "Early Evening". She also did a plant study for the observational paper and her Personal Study was called "Poet of Light - A Study of Turner". Nina obtained a grade 'B' result, but unlike many of the students she did not want to train for teaching. Instead she chose to stay at home - she had two boys of school age - and carry on with her own creative work as a painter.

Nina had her own personal tutor for a time, but he died in 1975. The following year she wrote from Devon to say that she had had a major operation, but felt that she would be able to cope as long as she could paint. She referred to the opportunity that the area provided, painting the coast, the harbour and a local fisherman's boat, and also illustrating a children's book. But Devon was only a temporary arrangement as her husband was working on a contract. Her home was now in the north of Blackpool, where she had a lovely studio made out of the loft space. "Its wonderful to have somewhere of my own to retire to from the distractions of the outside world!" she wrote in her letter.

Painting had certainly become very important indeed to Nina,



and in 1977 an invitation arrived to a pre-view of an Exhibition of Paintings and Poetry at the Lytham St. Annes Art Gallery. The exhibition was a shared one with two other local artists. Nina had fifteen paintings on show, mostly in oils and some very large. Her interest still centred around the landscape theme. There were pictures of sky and sea giving a mystical feeling of infinity. It was possible to view them in a slightly schizophrenic way by allowing oneself to blend into and merge with the scene. One did not want to look at the paintings, but rather to float within them. Colour and ethereal light were represented with power and subtlety. Between the pictures there were framed poems and poetic statements that seemed to reinforce the message conveyed by the visual work: "Please tell me where I am. This is a terrifying place; But its also rather beautiful, this whirling inner space In which I find myself."

Nina also exhibited in Garstang, Luxembourg and locally as a member of the Blackpool Art Society. She worked very hard in this way, planning and arranging things. However, in the autumn of 1977 she wrote to say that at the time she felt 'dried up' from the creative angle: "At the moment I can't do a thing. Looking at the situation from a philosophical view point it is probably a passing phase, there have been setbacks like this before, but usually they resolve themselves in time."









Nina Green

Opposite: 1. Red Horizon 2. The Secret Valley

*Nina Green*



Nina Green

"Creative art begins not so much with paint and brushes, although these make its manifestation possible, but from the desire to express the intangible in a tangible form, and to give visual expression to one's deepest feelings and convictions.

Firstly, then, one must discover what these feelings are and a certain amount of self knowledge. I personally find that periods of solitude and introspection are necessary in order to gain this insight, unpleasant though these discoveries may be at times. From this approach I found that although an individual I am also a part of the 'whole' - and was able to identify with my surroundings and to feel part of them. I tend then to seek inspiration according to the prevailing mood. By taking solitary walks along deserted beaches or bleak mountains and moorland I feel a sense of belonging, of recognising my origins and an awareness of an answering solitude which echoes the feelings deep within myself. I am solitary - yet not alone. In short for me it means accepting the unknown spiritual aspects of life as well as acknowledging the obvious material ones. A solitary bird in flight momentarily stirs in me the urge to follow - to be free of the material confines and restrictions, and following this sensation comes the familiar and exciting urge to paint. Music, and the thoughts and memories evoked by it also proves a powerful stimulus.

When feeling more extrovert I feel the need of people around me, and the desire to communicate and belong similarly stimulates the creative urge. It is in this context that I found art classes most rewarding - the interchanging of ideas and above all the opportunity to meet people with the same interest at heart yet all with different approaches, so that one gains a new flexibility of ideas, a willingness to learn and perhaps change. I stated that paints and brushes make manifestation of ideas possible, yet without some expert guidance into the mysteries of composition, colour, form etc, one would probably suffer the frustration of lacking the confidence to even begin to attempt self-expression in paint. The teaching aspect also helps to develop self-discipline towards study and therefore encourages art appreciation in general, and by establishing an enquiring mind provides a firm foundation on which to build and progress long after a course has been completed."



Zbigniew Jarzecki



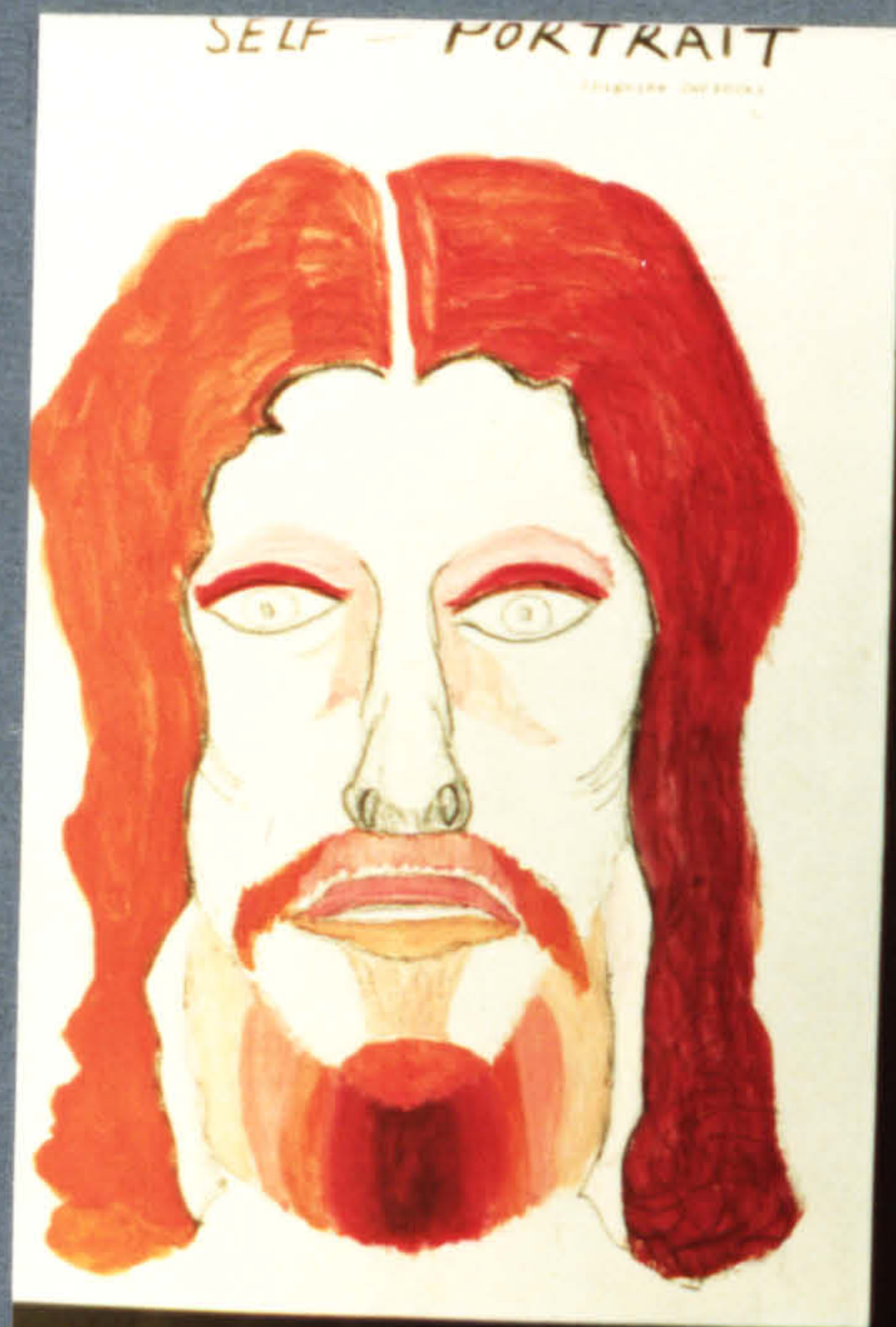
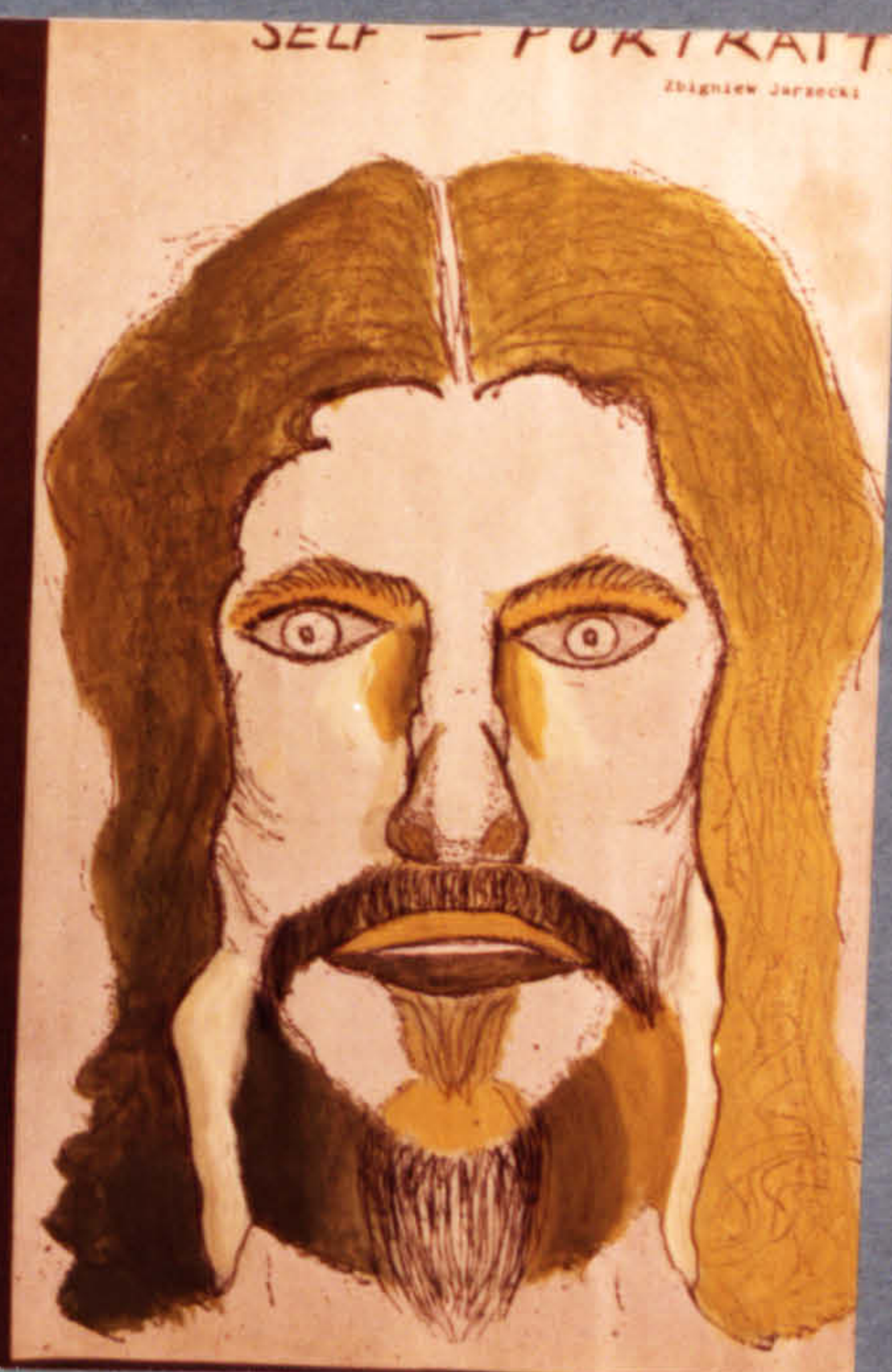
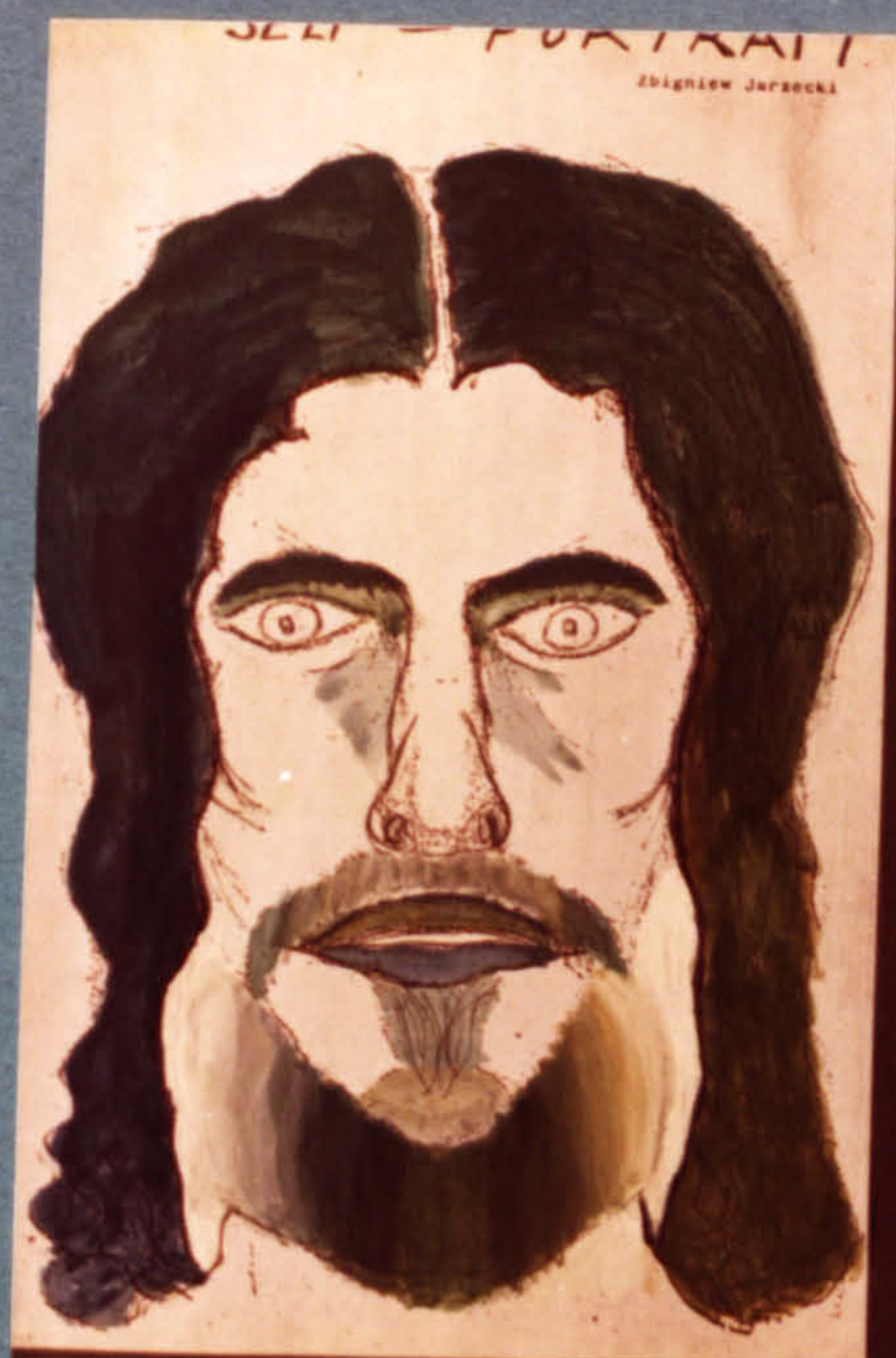
Zbigniew outside the Tate  
Gallery 1977



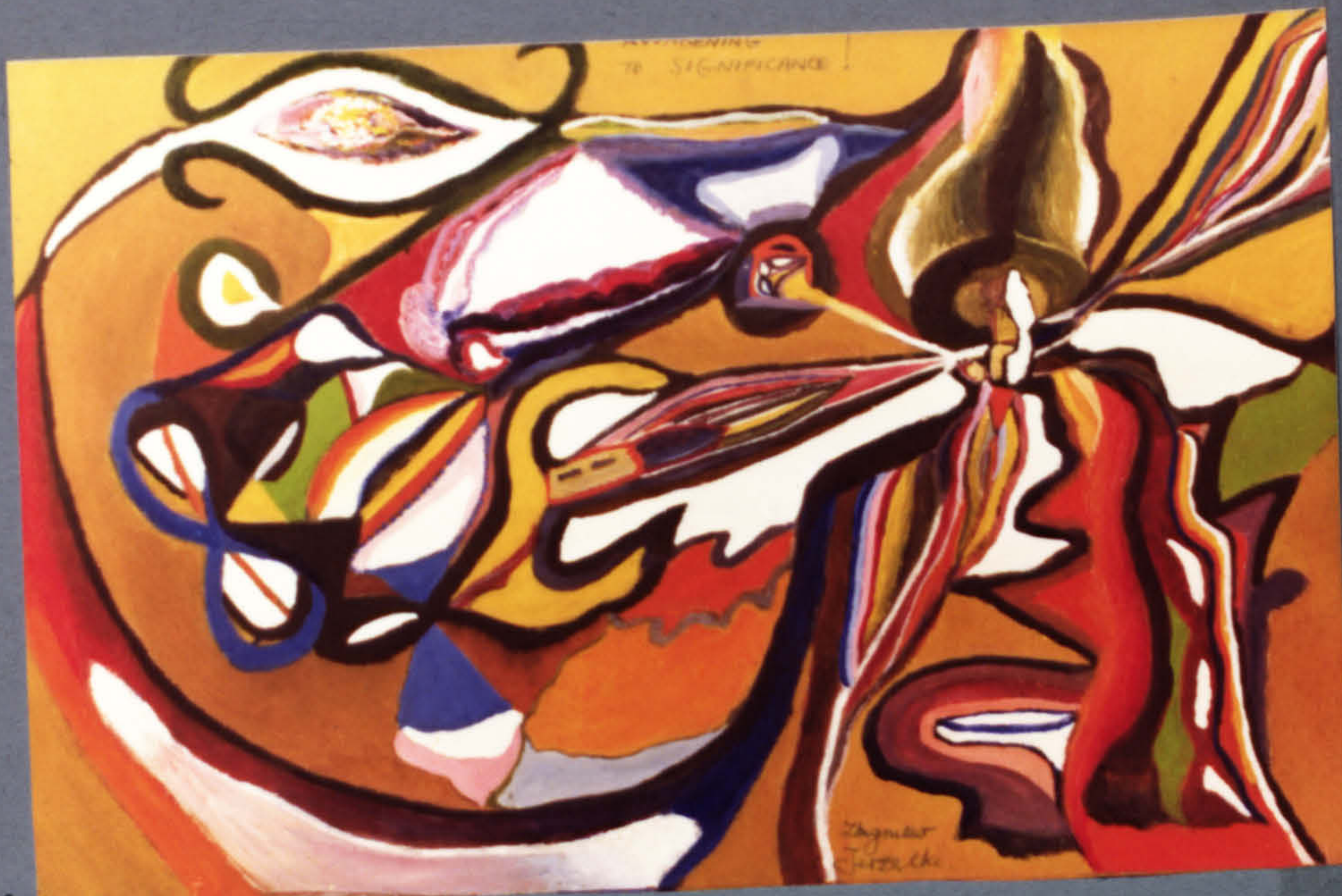


Zbigniew's First Painting - He used a large shell  
as a starting point Early December 1976  
'Awakening to Significance' and 'Psychedelic Sea'  
were both painted in February 1977









1.



2.

Zbigniew Jarzecki

1. Awakening to Significance

2. Psychedelic Sea



Zbigniew Jarzecki - Part ICreativity Sessions with one Student

Friday mornings since November 1976 have been something rather special. There has been an attempt to establish contact through aesthetic experience and intellectual adventure.

Bish arrived at the college as a science graduate and a teacher with an interest in poetry and music and open to new experience...

As I taught him art I could make the following observations regarding my own thought processes: I was very much aware of teaching as a two-way process, but this is only possible in the fullest sense when the student is a creative individual. I was anxious to contribute, in the form of offering knowledge and inspiration, but also in need of receiving a stimulus myself, in order to carry the teaching further. Teaching easily becomes sterile when it consists of merely giving out the known, without any chance for true growth and development on the part of the teacher.

For teaching to be really creative it is necessary for the teacher to be fired with enthusiasm as a result of what the student makes of the experience.

Bish very soon made a great deal of the experience. After about one month of experimentation with the basic elements of art, such as colour, tone, rhythm, harmony, texture and depth; something suddenly happened: Over the Christmas holidays a truly original abstract picture was produced, obviously the work of a highly differentiated individual with a strong personal outlook. What was even more important, the experience of painting it had been an apocalyptic one. Here was a serious student of colour and form with immense potential and a new world opening up before him. Teaching him to progress further would no doubt be full of even more dramatic surprises.

His next painting followed the theme of one of his poems - The Scream - It was called "Society's Claws at my Throat". It was a very powerful picture, evoking the same kind of response as Munch's work.

Then in a different mood he produced "Awakening to Significance" again following the theme of a poem. This picture reached a new peak of creative achievement. It was highly complex and yet extremely well integrated and full of interest. It was possible to enjoy looking at it either as a whole or inch by inch to absorb



the fascinating details of colour and tonal gradations and the strikingly original juxtaposition of flowing forms. This painting came very near to visual poetry and yet it was also on a parallel with the drama and turmoil of the most exciting chemical processes.

Looking over Bish's sketch-book I observed an amazing drawing entitled "Self-Portrait". In a different way it was as powerful as his abstract work. It possessed something of a mystical, Christ-like image and also suggested an enigmatic, introspective being. The eyes had a penetrating gaze, and it was as if the expression was saying something profound both about the nature of the human predicament and also the human opportunity. It was decided that the portrait should be photo-copied many times, and that he should work through the spectrum range on a chromatic and tonal series.

Around the same time Bish was also working intensively on his poetry; and every break throughout the week he could be found in "Rebels' Corner" noting down ideas and significant phrases.

Around the same time Bish was also working on a painting that came to be known as "The Psychedelic Sea". It arose spontaneously from a suggestion of mine that he might like to use black paper and gold and silver paint. The sea developed, over several Fridays, as a wonderful blending of red, greens, blues, yellow, black, white, gold and silver. Pouring into the sea were a rainbow and a retort-like form that appeared to be distilling a rainbow. High above was a strange sun with golden rays and an eye. This picture had surrealistic undertones. To me personally, it represented everything that was important, both in terms of creative art and also with reference to teaching method - the free, uninhibited expression of the individual. As we watched the painting taking shape it was as if we were both observers in the creative process. It was as if the process could take care of itself once we had taken the initial steps.

This picture also followed the theme of a poem: The poem that Bish wrote about me entitled: "Ada - Hope in the Chosen Few - Part I". In this poem he refers to nature's yearful cry and to creativity's inward eye.

As Bish works on a picture of this kind he keeps up a running commentary of his thoughts. Some of this I wrote down as follows:

"I am going to take the purple now and see what that does. Something is happening over here, it could develop given time.



Its going to be psychedelic. There is not going to be any compromise to be beautiful - more psychedelic.

I am playing around with the brush now - just playing around to see what will come out.

Beautiful green, interlocking waves, colours that are tremendous, ripples and lights coming into it. Its a case of getting the flow, that's what I want, the alternation of gold and silver, re-echoing, superimposition of colours, spreading the gold, so that it goes here, here and here. The theme of the gold, it works actually.

I want to express tonal range... Here is a tonal link - blue, green to purple, a real link. This is all going to blend, then something revolutionary is going to happen here!"

As the weeks went by a certain pattern for the Fridays emerged, with flexibility as the key word. A typical Friday in March, for example, would tend to include a contribution from me in the form of a reading or series of comments on art theory, adult learning or creativity; there would possibly be visual material for stimulation. Then Bish would produce some of the themes that he had been working on, such as poetry or paintings or ideas; these became known as surprises. The paintings would often be unrolled an inch at a time, with dramatic pauses to increase the enjoyment by prolonging each revelation. After break - which incidentally was always a period of intense discussion - Bish would usually paint, sometimes returning in the afternoon to continue. Finally he would roll up the picture with a remark about giving it another five hours at home.

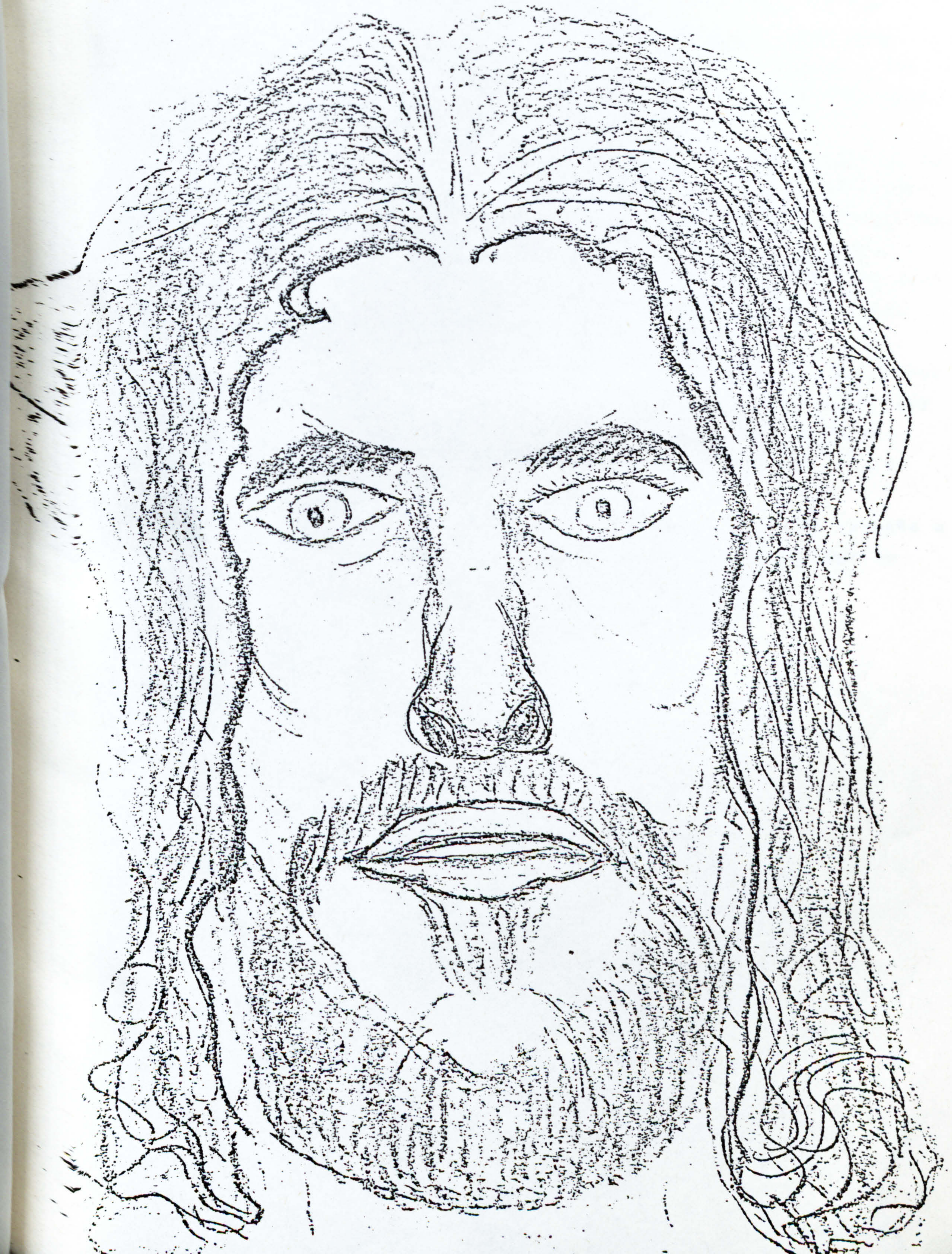
After so many pictures with a wide colour range, in his next work he restricted himself to black, greys, white and yellows. I suggested it should be called "The Soul of the South Pole". It was very much a 'depth' abstraction and seemed like the sun on caverns of ice.

On March 25th there were 5 surprises. On April 1st there were 10 surprises, but these were held in reserve for the evening. On this occasion an "Aesthetic Evening" was arranged at 55 Parrs Wood Ave., with a meal at the Cafe Royal. John's scintillating flow of ideas added a third dimension to the "Happening". Bish's surprises began with a poem "To John - Frozen Hope" and ended at 5.30 a.m. with a psychology test.

It was interesting for Bish's twin brother to see his paintings on loan in my home on a rainbow wall.

Bish felt a strong urge to know more of the background development of art in our time, and so we arranged to visit the Tate Gallery and this proved to be very stimulating.







Early in the month of May there were a wonderful range of surprises: Several poems were at the interesting 'simmering' stage. For example, "The MAP of My Life" expressed some very powerful ideas about the meaning of music, art and poetry. Two paintings showed terrific excitement about colour, and Bish said that he was working on another psychedelic sea.

Perhaps the most fascinating of all the surprises around this time were the completed "Chromatic and Tonal Series" - The Self-Portrait pictures now depicted Bish with hair and beard in purple, blue, blue-green, yellow-green, yellow, orange, red and red-purple. These pictures were given to me, and after arousing much interest in the Foyer, they are now displayed on coloured felt against a white wall.

And so the great wave of creative activity carries on. Never was a class title so appropriate. Bish is now working on a very calm, serene picture entitled: "The Heart of Green Paradise". This forms a contrast to "The Soul of the South Pole." He is also making sketches for my portrait.

Bish has had to seek temporary employment, in order to make a really adventurous summer possible, but the ideas continue to flow and evening sessions are in progress.

A.W.



Background

I was born in Wrexham, Wales, in 1950, studied for 4 years in Liverpool, but have spent most of my life in Manchester. My parents are both Polish and emigrated to England during the latter stages of the Second World War. My father, an officer in the Polish Army, was forced through circumstances into factory employment. My mother enjoys sewing and embroidery. I have a twin brother (fraternal) who is a science teacher and a sister also trained as a teacher, both now live in Yorkshire.

My educational and social backgrounds have emerged from a very turbulent and fickle existence both in childhood and early adult years. One of my common traits appears to be the ability to delve into almost any human activity and to keep on reshuffling between activities. In my formative school years I became easily bored with the very dull school I attended. I seemed to suffer from lack of challenge and stimulating people in those days. Chemistry was the first subject I became interested in, but the fact I graduated in that subject came about only through chance and limited subject choice at college level. I was successful in the subject and therefore encouraged to pursue it further.

In retrospect I have discovered that as a result of my own explorations and selective interactions with people I am more artistically inclined. The educational system has had a detrimental effect on my individual development since it has suppressed my wandering talents and attempted to mould me into a stereotype.

Only by being allowed freedom in the last 3-4 years have I been able to discover my natural self. Immersing myself in subjects such as philosophy, psychology, music, drama, painting



and poetry has brought out facets of my personality and my inner make-up that were previously thought to be non-existent.

A philosophy of dissipating the dynamic drive via creative self-expression has gradually evolved as a result of my intense and versatile doses of education. The culmination of this developing outlook on life has been expressed in a poem entitled "The Map in My Life" which highlights, analytically, the function of Music, Art and Poetry as media to bear out my peak moments of creative expression.

### The Theoretical Background

Creativity is a complex, constantly changing and elusive process and therefore difficult to pinpoint precisely. Defining it may not be that important, but since practical evidence shows us that a creative process is taking place, tracing and monitoring this process may be the most valid method of assessing creativity. However, before we can trace and monitor the process we must examine the media through which Creativity is most effectively manifested. This then involves the artist in self analysis of the work that is being carried out.

An objective definition of Creativity is virtually impossible. Some definitions may be noted as guiding suggestions of the Creative Process. Creativity could be considered as a hybrid of component ideas. A RESONANCE HYBRID model could postulate many component definitions of Creativity, and the average sum of all these ideas could represent Creativity, or the concept could oscillate or resonate between extreme component ideas of Creativity. Alternatively, each component definition could be selectively used according to a specific instance of the Creative Process.



### Formal Definition using Resonance Hybrid Model

A number of selected definitions can represent the Creative Process, each one in itself does not carry enough weight to describe the process, but the sum of all the selected ideas represents an integral hybridised account of the Creative Process.

From personal experience there appears to be two types of Creativity:

- a) A general synthetic type.
- b) A selective analytical type.

a) This general type of Creativity would be inherently embedded in everyone. The way we react to the environment constitutes some sort of behaviour that is different with each individual. No single moment can ever be exactly repeated by this interaction procedure. Examples bear out the point: The way one's life unfolds day in - day out, year in - year out, is a manifestation of ultimate Creation. The hitch-hiker creates his own existence only by the decisions he makes. A Creativity potential appears to be stored in everyone beyond the functionary activities that uphold the basic survival drive. A difficulty that arises here is drawing the line between the mechanical, necessary functions of life and the energy used up in reacting with the environment.

b) The selective type of Creativity is attached to a deeper and finer extraction or analysis of the environment and subsequent use of the thought, image or abstract idea in a recorded form, recapturing some property of nature - real or abstract - possibly on paper. The mental state of the creator and the media through which the image or idea is conveyed seem to be the important features of this type of Creativity.

Composers, painters, poets, scientists, philosophers and mathematicians are examples of analytical creators diversifying



the tree of knowledge by their individual interpretations. All the varied Creative expressions have a common denominator link i.e. with experience and Nature. The real world is out there to be distorted and differentiated by our fickle, modulating senses.

### Component Definitions

#### a) General Types

1. A mental/physical reaction to the external environment bringing about change.
2. A form of expression that utilises the dynamic drive in any activity not involving survival tendencies such as animalistic imitation.
3. An activity that tries to simulate or complement nature.

#### b) Specific Types

4. Exposition of a new idea based on previously assimilated experience.
5. Eradication of influence and knowledge from one's repertoire and starting from a completely new point, e.g. innovation.
6. Developing a theme progressively and synthetically from a unit point, for example, elaboration.
7. Retracting into a vacuum, then asserting individuality by allowing synthetic experiences to build, ramify and crystallise.
8. Transforming matter into some new state.
9. An expression of evolved traits.

#### c) Mechanistic Types

10. An inspired action triggered by some biochemical process.
11. An action inspired by a complex mental/spiritual or extra sensory perception process.



## Recognising Creativity

Traits: All art has a common denominator of being subject to the spectrum analysis. On the one extreme there is a clear area of pure art that possesses distinctive qualities of unique creation or expression. On the other extreme one could find pure "non-art" that has not been derived from constructive or imaginative thought. The difficulty that arises is the line that apparently needs to be drawn to distinguish the two. The same dilemma seems to exist between creativity and non-creativity. The central area of overlap poses problems of ambiguity and meaningfulness.

Creativity can be inserted against the background of the two extremes in order to instil some meaning into the concept upholding the word itself. Thus the degree of Creativity could be measured according to which scale of traits a given work of art leaned towards. Most works of art must possess both types of traits, the greater works possessing the more distinctive ones.

## The Traits Characteristic of the Extremities of the Creative

### Process

#### Creative

Invention  
Improvisation  
Innovation  
Change  
Progression  
Divergence  
Novelty  
Originality  
Elaboration  
Exploration  
Subversion  
Modulation  
Mutation  
Metamorphosis  
Transformation

#### Non-Creative

Copying  
Imitation  
Duplication  
Simulation  
Emulation  
Stagnation  
Lateral drift  
Clinical functions  
Mechanical computing  
Idolisation  
Plagiarism  
Repetition



### Conditions for Creativity

Moments of creation may come at the most unusual times and places: in the middle of the night, in the bath, during the course of an important ritual or even in the wake of adversity and rebellion. From my experience creativity can never flourish when a person is subjected to the static condition for too long. People and the right type of conversation may be very important in preparing the platform for creativity. Usually a high-powered intellectual exchange acts as a precursor to moments of intense inspiration and novel thought. On the other hand, a tranquil setting is important also, particularly for clear ideas and pure expression.

Sometimes surrendering the concept of time helps to eradicate negative, detrimental influences. The individual, in isolation and unhindered by the constraints of time, can unfold naturally. He can start and stop, tune in and switch off as he wishes.

Physical health, control of mind and freedom are important factors. The individual needs to be in command of himself and his environment.

Regimentation, social pressures, war and disease are a few examples of factors that may inhibit creativity; but some great geniuses have triumphed over them.



## The Media for Creative Expression

The examples I have chosen to illustrate my creative journeys in expression are Music, Art and Poetry. The Creative process in each is the same, though the manifestations vary. The similarity revolves around the appropriate prerequisite conditions:

- a) Stimulating atmosphere/people.
- b) Some previous knowledge.
- c) An initial theme, idea or starting point.

The differences in the manifestation of creation are reflected in the different instruments used in each subject.

Because the attributes of harmony, tone and 'colour' may be attached to all three art forms important interweaving links must be innately present within these areas. Each art form may therefore provide inspiration for the others.

## Music

My main instrument is the recorder and I have composed some of my own tunes for the descant recorder.

The basic requirements for composing music are having a feel for key and tonality: awareness of the characteristic intervals between notes and the pull of basic notes onto the fundamental key note. A general feeling for rhythm and melody accounts for the structuring of the composition. The familiarity of the relationship between notes comes about through practice on the instrument.

## Personal Account

During the last three years I have been studying something of the theory of music and practising on the recorder. It is important to have stimulating people and competent musicians around as they build the platform for individual inspiration.



My main inspiration has come from experimental conditions where the atmosphere is loose, the people prepared to search for new tunes, new sounds and even to abandon rules. Listening to the musical masterpieces, the sounds of nature and enjoying moments of tranquillity have all contributed towards the urge to compose. Situations and surroundings may influence the individual to adopt a certain mood and then simulate that mood in musical terms.

On holiday in Poland last summer (Aug.77) I was able to find the right conditions to be able to compose a simple, yet special tune for the recorder. Part of the inspiration came while camping in the woods at night. As a result of this I decided to title the tune "Call from the Woods".

### Analysis

The tune gives the feeling of going on a journey and coming back safely home. The feeling of satisfaction is achieved because the tune stays within the confines of an octave of the key, yet movement and manipulation occurs from first to last note. The safe, satisfying feeling is reached because the tune starts and finishes on the tonic note (E).

The tune can be broken down into two parts: Theme A is exposed within the first six bars, theme B concludes the tune in the last three bars. The tune was composed in three stages. The inspirational, creative part came at the beginning when trying to establish the main theme which sets the mood, i.e. the first two bars. This was done by trial and error and searching for a means to convey the precise mood of the performer. The remaining two stages were completed mainly through the logical feeling the individual has for music, coupled with the general feel for musical progression.

The creation appears always to be the initiation, the instigation of a general theme and the rest follows by a process of moulding and shaping.



## Art (Visual Media, Painting)

### The Role of Painting

In my own experience I have found that this media has widened my mode of expression. Ideas that before I could only express in words can now be churned around and furnished into a painting. The end product itself can serve many functions for the artist. A painting may symbolise nature, capture a moment or setting or reflect an intellectual or emotional state. An expressionist painting may prepare the groundwork for a psychological study of a person. An individual component such as colour may be isolated and studied on its own through abstract experimentation to reflect the human condition. Drawing and painting together sharpen the faculty of observation and insight into nature's processes. The activity itself may offer therapeutic release and the development of the personality.

### Personal Account

I have had no earlier training in art, but in 1976 I attended non-vocational art classes at the College of Adult Education. It was here that I met Miss A. Wightmore, the author of this thesis and initiator of creative expression in these classes.

When I started painting I never expected it to be as absorbing and fascinating as it turned out to be. I have always been full of ideas and needed a flowing medium to carrying them along. I was introduced to the principles of colour, tone, line, shape, harmony and texture. I was able to imprint my personality on paper in a very short space of time, mainly via abstract art. The freedom of approach drove me on to develop a distinctly individual style of painting. The unique nature of the classes I shared with Miss Wightmore was the fact that both sides featured in the creative process. It began in an exchange of



ideas and developed into a sequence of reinforced inspiration, mutually shared. It was like a ziz-zaz link that existed between us. Ideas would build, progress and then modulate. The implications of this meeting seem to suggest that collective creativity could have an important role in education.

### Analysis of a Specific Painting

#### "Awakening to Significance"

This picture expresses a state of mind. The general feeling of the painting is of harmony, balance and restful intrigue. This was achieved by use of interesting colour contrasts, bold and winding shapes and haunting implicit links between the shapes. These links provide a meandering movement around the design. There is no dominating colour, thus the eye can absorb equal amounts of red, blue, yellow orange and green; this adds to the peaceful feeling of the painting.

The initial theme lies in the title. The word significance made me think of how often life's forces converge onto one point. Then the words 'light' and 'awakening' followed and their associations with white induced inserting bright areas of white paint to highlight a point of focus at the right hand region. All the white areas seem to emanate from the focal centre or converge on it. The other coloured shapes fall into the pattern, the eye is carried around but eventually comes to rest at the significant point. Both logical procedures and trial and error sequences feature in the creation of a painting. A balanced composition usually requires a selective interweaving of the two kinds of approach. (See p.299d.)



## Poetry

Poetry is closely related to music and painting, since many of the underlying rules in the composition of the art form are similar, for example, tonality, harmony and rhythm. Writing effective poetry depends on having insight into such factors. Secondly, the poet needs to experience; only through living can a person attach significant meaning to the words he uses. A poet who does not write from experience has difficulty in communicating his work to others and is in danger of writing flat, academic poetry.

The spectrum approach can also apply here: At the one extreme there appears to be a 'Computational Poetry' and at the other an 'Inspirational Poetry'. The computational poet plays around with word sequence and word atmosphere, permutating the number of possibilities of word arrangement. There appears to be more creative potential in the inspirational poet.

## Personal Account

My concern is with ideas, relationships between ideas, concepts and the paradoxes of the universe. I am fond of economy and elegance of expression of thought patterns. I am interested in what makes a work of art function successfully.

I have only been writing poetry for two years, but I feel I have succeeded in developing an individual style. I attended a poetry course for a while and still attend writing classes; but much of my inspiration comes from unexpected situations. It was n't school that launched me into poetry, but sheer adversity and boredom, performing ultra-mundane tasks in a laboratory.

Poetry has become a mode of expression that captures a dynamic moment of experience and locks it into a static position. Recording my experiences serves to monitor a creative progression



of the mind.

### Methods of Approach

I have written 30 poems. There is no standard procedure in composing poetry. There always appears to be an initial theme from which a poem grows and a searching for the right words so that the whole piece of work holds together.

The methods employed have included:

1. Writing directly from an emotional experience, such as responses to people and nature.
2. Writing from intellectual discovery, exploration and hybridisation of ideas.
3. Bouncing off a particular atmosphere of a place or people. Words, ideas and imagery can flow because associations are evoked.
4. Writing in isolation, with a view to eradicating as much influence as possible, in order to express individual purity.
5. The combination of poetry and painting and the use of links between the two in order to find points of inspiration.

Alternatively, a painting may be used as the starting point of a poem or vice versa.

### Conclusions

Creativity is a process - a process like time that can never stop - there is no beginning, middle or end, the process is in a constant flux, a wheel in perpetual motion. The creator is like a magician who unlocks, unveils or unfolds the creation out of nothingness and presents it to our senses to be perceived in wonderment. Peak experiences and genius are hall-marks of creativity, it remains for each individual to find his own method.

Matter and space are waiting to be manipulated, reshuffled and recombined in some new form. Man and nature inextricably collaborate to furnish the creation, a new assemblage is born.



Creativity possesses dual properties, like man himself, the complement law applies: The innovator digs out holes, the benefactor fills them up.

There appears to be an important formula or interrelation between creativity and knowledge, experience and influence. All are important for creation, yet all are subservient to the creator. Too much storage of knowledge may block the creative process, sap the surgent energy and the urge to be explorative. Experience is important, but with an overload neophobia sets in; sometimes maturity makes a person complacent. The innovator is trying to avoid the 'know it all' situation. Influence plays a significant part in creativity, particularly to ignite the first spark, but too much may stifle the pure individual development.

Pure creativity may be imagined in an ideal model depicting the mental state in isolation, devoid of knowledge, experience and influence. This type of model would predict that pure creativity lies embedded in the inner make up of the person. A practical representation of creativity would incorporate the external world and its interaction with the individual state.

#### Examples of Zbigniew's Poetry

The poems cover a wide range of subjects; from "Laboratory Drudgery" to "The Scream!", from "Time" to "The Wandering Molecule". The three selected for this chapter are entitled: "The Map in My Life", "To Ada" and "A Mathematical Metaphysical Riddle":-



The Map in My Life

The Map I follow in my life  
is Music, Art and Poetry;

I see my mission in a Vision,  
To search along the winding roads of inner darkness  
To reach above the mediocre bounds of reason  
To touch beneath the precious depths of human awareness  
To savour Love and Hope for every season  
And find the secret path that leads to blissful absoluteness.

Nature holds the key to this worldly prize  
Mother earth, supplier of the goods, waits to be unlocked  
Father time, watcher of the skies, marks out the periphery of  
our scope

Child of wisdom, seeker of the expanding Universe,  
teaches us the instinct of imagination.

My Map is a tripartite book of destiny that guides by intuition,  
Music via the proficient instrument  
Art through the flowing brush  
Poetry by means of the inspiring pen.

Music,

A symphony of dreams  
A dance of life,  
Simulating nature  
Stirring the heart  
Of soaring heights  
or melancholic depths;

The Musician explores,  
Rhythm beating  
Melody flowing  
Tunes emerging  
Tonality changing  
Harmony adding  
Counterpoint balancing  
Instruments blending;

God giving  
Soul meeting  
Composer treating  
Performer rendering  
Listener absorbing  
Man preserving.



## Art,

A world of insight  
 A synthesis of the external,  
 Observing nature  
 Recording experience  
 An empathic expression  
 Blending skill and emotion;

The Painter absorbs,  
 Lines forming  
 Shapes developing  
 Colours blending  
 Tonality wandering  
 Themes echoing  
 Texture enhancing  
 Harmony balancing;

Inner secrets  
 Outward pouring  
 Reshaping stimuli  
 Projecting individuality  
 Revealing spirit  
 Creating symbol  
 Instilling power  
 Bestowing pleasure  
 Adorning creation.

## Poetry,

The language of experience  
 A structured wisdom  
 Of elevated thoughts  
 or noble emotions  
 A Universal statement  
 or personal imaginings;

The Poet ponders,  
 Inspired thoughts  
 Expressed fragments  
 Developing theme  
 Scheming rhymes  
 Poignant imagery  
 Wide vision  
 Loving words  
 Arranging ideas;

Feeling life  
 Imagining situation  
 Unveiling the hidden  
 Recollecting the known  
 Upholding judgement  
 Crystallising virtue  
 Delivering honesty  
 Understanding Mankind.

Z.J.



To Ada

Hope in the Chosen Few

Part I

When you walked across my path  
 I knew our worlds would collide,  
 A flash of light restored my faith  
 A frenzied torrent stirred inside,  
 A spark of fire enkindled my desire  
 Dreams, thought dead, were reborn to inspire.

Your world so open yet so complete  
 Your awareness paramount for all to meet  
 Your ideas so boundless yet so concrete  
 Your skills pervading to both elite and delete  
 Your colours so imaginative, such a treat!  
 Your affinity for understanding none can beat!

You taught me the art  
 To paint what's in my heart  
 To choose and blend colours that delight  
 To explore and express a world so bright  
 To uncover nature's yearnful cry  
 To discover creativity's inward eye.

And I,

blinded by the awakening light  
 Emancipated by such a strong creative force  
 Exalted by the prospect of embellished fulfilment  
 Was relieved of every desperate plight  
 Blessed with a supreme empathic grace  
 Resurrected from life's gnawing, relentless oblivion.

Now every time you cross my path  
 I feel my hope cemented in yours.

Z.J.



# A Mathematical Metaphysical Riddle

God and Nature and Man  
revolve

The Universe evolves -

And Who is Centre  
of the Universe?

Probing Concepts

Question: Who rules Who?

If God be Centre of the Circle  
and Nature the space between,  
then Man be lodged onto Circumference  
obeying  $C = 2\pi R$ .

If Man be Centre of the Circle  
God be reflecting in concentric ripples,  
then Nature resides at infinity  
obeying  $C = 2\pi R$ .

If Nature be Centre of the Circle  
Man be a radiant observer,  
then God be an intangible image  
disobeying  $C = 2\pi R$ .

Maths and Metaphysics

point the way -

Logic has its say

to link each point

in the progression chain,

The observer assimilates

The experience formulates

The concept engraves

The process circulates -

If Logic be the straight line  
and the circle the result  
of straight line extended to infinity  
then circle outlines the concept.



Concepts like Circles  
 can be traced on paper  
 following circular paths  
 simulating cyclic laws -  
 the point of focus  
 defines the problem  
 The compass inscribes  
 the metaphysical phenomena,  
 Mathematics proscribes  
 symmetry and design,  
 the circle completes -  
 Life's wheel turns  
 Analogy prompts a solution.

The Circle is the system  
 of Society, World and Earth,  
 The Sphere is the network  
 of Universe, Galaxy and Cosmos.

God and Nature and Man  
 are three spheres  
 Lodged on a peripheral axis  
 of a common cosmic sphere,  
 revolving in  
                     triangular  
 confrontation,  
 justling for the omnipotent Key  
 to unlock  
 the parodies of the Universe,  
 obeying  $C = 4\pi R^2$ .

If God be the Light  
     Nature the Vision  
     Man the Reason,  
 then  $\pi$  be the chain-maker  
             the chain-linker  
 of point with line  
     line with length  
     length with space  
     space with time.

Zbigniew Jarzecki

June 21st, 1978.



Comments on Zbigniew's Contribution

Basically Bish and I hold similar views on creativity. Where Bish speaks of creativity being sometimes limited by knowledge, experience and influence; I have stressed the dangers of creativity being limited by too much structure. We both seek for flexible and open situations. We are both aware of the fact that the creative person, like an exotic greenhouse plant, may have special requirements if growth is not to be stunted. We both recognise however that there are varying levels of creativity and varying degrees of commitment to the creative force, varying degrees of involvement with the creative process. Total commitment in any sphere is rare and the resulting expressions should be respected and studied.

It is particularly interesting to note how a person with a specific scientific training approaches an analysis of creativity: Bish does not try to force the subject into a straight-jacket, or to impose precise definitions that would be merely artificial in this field. Conscious of the limitations of objectivity, he says that definitions should be treated as guiding suggestions. He then goes on to use a spectrum of creative/non-creative traits. Terms such as dilemma, paradox and ambiguity crop up in the account just as they do in the thesis generally.

It is of special value to have a person continuously creative in music, painting and poetry, finding common ground between the three activities, and deriving inspiration from the areas in which they merge.

Bish has described his situation as an "unusual, turbulent but versatile existence"; perhaps something of this is conveyed in his expressions.





Z.J.

The development of an abstraction  
from the structure of the chair





Z. J. 1/1/79

Tripartite Meeting



Meeting in DualityThe week of the Spring EquinoxFriday, March 23, 19799.30p.m. - 4.30a.m.

During the course of the evening Bish maintained his flow of ideas and his usual succession of surprises. He brought two completed paintings: "Summer Euphoria Distilled" based on vivid flower forms and "Tripartite Meeting", an abstraction suggesting the interweaving of three patterns. In the process of development were three pictures on the blue, green and mauve theme demonstrating an intensified evolution of shapes and tonal qualities. He said that when I had introduced him to art it was fortunate that I had not interfered with his adventurous feeling for colour. He thought that creativity was best brought out by nonconformist methods of teaching, allowing free reign to the student's own inclinations. Conventional teaching tended to offer a safe, but less interesting route along the lines of accepted colour harmony. At this point Bish asked for information about Kandinsky and the way he had responded to colour.

Then, turning to the material collected from my recent visit to the "Outsiders" art exhibition, Bish observed that such artists were prepared to be adventurous. It was as if they were saying: "There might be a paradise of dreams within yourself, so why not take a risk and unlock your own ideas." It was agreed that creativity was in some way linked with daring to be an individual.

Following wine and the music of Schubert, a whole range of topics were reviewed at an ever accelerated speed. Bish noted that it was sometimes enjoyable to present an unusual or abstruse idea without elaboration: "Why spell things out all the time?" he asked. Before long the discussion turned to Einstein. Bish revealed that he was planning to write a poem in tribute to him.



First he said that he had to read and think more about his theories. He had watched the TV programme entitled "Einstein's Universe" twice and written down some points as raw material: The terse and potent equations, for example, and expressions such as "warped space" and "space tells matter how to move, matter tells space how to curve", also the post-Einsteinian expression "Time stops at a black hole!" I provided some notes and articles on the subject and noted that as Einstein was working on his Special Theory of Relativity around 1905, Picasso was on the point of shattering accepted perspective in art through his invention of Cubism; Kandinsky was on the brink of a whole new world of abstraction. Parallels between modern physics and Surrealism and Zen Buddhism were considered. The discussion turned to metaphysics and the freedom of the will and finally to Bish's latest poem: "Death and Duality". This being a non-personal and intellectual expression it was not in any way morbid or depressing.

It was interesting that Bish had recent completed paintings and poetry and also paintings and poetry in the process of development. This may be described as his typical way of reaching a peak and working out his ideas.

#### Summer 1979

Bish's latest pictures are an indication of the importance of creativity seen as continuing development and innovation. His abstractions are part of a process of genuine exploration and his portraits range from the 'straight' to the extremes of distortion - sometimes more 'schizophrenic' than schizophrenic art itself. Examples are shown on the following two pages:-



1. Abstract Garden Mural
2. Two-Way Portrait
3. Three-Way Portrait
4. Multiple Portrait



324 a





324b



Z.J.



John J. Cox



John at Didsbury 1979



324 cl



John Cox

Zoological Wonderland



John J. Cox

John came to my botany class in 1972. He was a full-time student at the college studying G.C.E. History and Literature. He needed a non-examination subject on one afternoon per week to complete his time-table.

From the first he showed a lively interest in the subject. He was 28 years of age. He had left his home - a farm in the west of Ireland - some years previously, and worked for a period as a salesman and as a policeman in England. Then he felt the urge to study. It was one afternoon in particular, during a discussion on ecology, that I realised John was definitely University material.

After working on a building site during the summer John returned to the college the following autumn to continue with his studies. By now his thoughts probably moving in the direction of university, and he needed another 'A' Level. He asked if there was any chance of doing 'A' Level Art with me. He had not done 'O' Level Art, in fact he had not done any art before.

I think I only hesitated for a fraction of a second, before replying to the effect that if he was prepared to be adventurous so was I. Previously I had had four or five students take 'A' Level Art without the 'O' Level and they were successful.

The 'A' Level at the college was somewhat intensive for everybody, as it was done in one year, which meant eight months.

John had six hours per week of tuition, and three examinations to prepare for. For the analytical observation paper he directed his attention towards plant studies. For the imaginative paper he concentrated mainly on abstract composition. For the written work he had a 4,000 word Personal Study to complete by Easter.

His initial standard in the area of direct drawing and



painting of a plant may have been regarded as off-putting, but we probably both saw it as a challenge. Week by week he worked on interesting plant material.

Students were allowed to bring their own specimens to the examination, selected from a specific list of types. When I saw John arriving at the college in a taxi and carefully carrying his succulent in flower; I knew from his manner and expression that he was going to be alright, on this, his most critical area of work.

The imaginative composition came rather more easily to him - he enjoyed experiments in colour, tone and texture and the exploration of form. For the 'Mock' Examination he chose the subject of "Zoological Wonderland". His painting seem to show the diversity of primitive forms of life. It also showed an original mind. The forms seemed to be 'saying': Look out! We are inventing the future of life on this planet.

However, for the examination itself, John was rather nervous. This was surprising, because students were allowed three weeks to make their preliminary studies, then 12hrs. to produce the painting. One would have thought this less of an ordeal than the mere 3hrs. allowed for the plant studies.

During the first 3hr. session of this examination John did not get any further than the painting of the background. The title he had chosen was "Winter Forms". He had many interesting ideas for frost patterns, snow crystals and icicles, but it was almost the 11th hour before the shapes began to materialise. He seemed to be fighting against the June heatwave to create an arctic blizzard. In the end he was probably successful. The painting expressed in terms of tone, texture and movement the drama of what it feels like to experience the wonder and the



exhilaration of winter, the wild excitement and freedom. It was pure expressionism, his favourite art form.

As regards the written work for the Personal Study, John was in his element. He selected a topic that offered the opportunity to concern himself with the relationship between art and society: "Expressionist Art and Political Instability in Germany 1900-1933: The Expressionist artist as social critic with particular reference to the work of Käthe Kollwitz". The final paragraph is given below:

"The political and socially conscious Expressionist artists all had one thing in common; they were fired by a strong sense of justice and rebelled against injustice through their art and actions. They are living monuments in their works, of noble spirits who bravely protested against ignorance and the imprisonment of mankind's dignity and nobility, representing as they did the indomitable spirit that has illuminated even the darkest times with hope, a guiding light that was only, and can only be temporarily dulled, but never fully extinguished."

1974

All went well and John passed with over 50% (only between five and ten marks lower than many students planning to take art as a specialist subject). By the autumn of 1974 John had been accepted by Liverpool University to study politics and history. John may be taken as an example of an individual for whom art - both painting and appreciation - provided an enriching and mind-expanding experience. The friendship that developed has given rise to a continuous dialogue on the theme of creative thinking and related topics.



Creativity escapes neat definition. It has no one precise pattern, for patterns would cripple and destroy it. It is easier to say what it is not, than what it is. It is not unthinking and rigid obedience to the 'accepted conventions' of our times; nor the blind following of intellectual fashions. It is not the suppression of our inimitable selves, for creativity is as boundless and immeasurable as space. It has its own impetus and laws which are largely undefinable. Its forms are constantly changing, separating and merging in a mysterious flux of being. Its many facets are evident in nature: in the perpetual ebb and flow of the tides, in geological change, in the cycle of birth, growth, decay, death and rebirth of all living forms.

The flowering of individual personality has its motion in creativity. It manifests itself in the art of the painter, the writer, the musician and the poet, where it may express its purest form. Yet it will not be confined anywhere and exists in all strata of life. The people who do menial jobs often display creativity in the humour and fantasy they create in order to overcome their material and psychological deprivations.

Although creativity of some kind can exist at all levels, there are some prerequisite conditions before it can develop beyond its earliest stages and achieve its full potential. Political, economic, social, religious and cultural constraints often inhibit, crush and block its growth. Creativity's earliest manifestation is best seen in the innocent imagination of childhood; in the child's earliest search for meaning in his everyday environment; a search that is adventurously pursued



before the heavy hand of conformity programmes the child for the adult world. A free imagination, a tendency towards originality, an adventurous nature and the courage to stand outside the main stream of conventions, are probably the most important characteristics of a creative person.

When I first tried to draw and paint trees and flowers I discovered that I had never really known what they looked like - I only thought I did - and the shapes I made bore little resemblance to the real objects. I had to learn to see again and to understand anew form, colour, light and shade. To become creative we must also learn to give imagination free reign and treat every idea with the freshness of a child. It is more difficult for us adults with our blinkered and distorted focus, but the gains are commensurate with the efforts. Equally important is the exploratory adventurousness of the child. A quality that should be nurtured throughout our lives. The ultimate aim of the creative individual should be to achieve harmonious fullness of character and a oneness with all things. There is probably no one route to being a creative person and we must each charter our own unique course. Each individual has to start with the building materials available from the background of his life and pursue his potential wherever it may lead.

My foundation stones were ostensibly meagre, born of a poor farming family in Ireland. However, there are gifts in every situation and my lack of formal, post-primary education was complemented by contact with a number of highly developed eccentrics. They did not accept the conventional wisdom and had the courage to think their own way. These were the people I gravitated towards, their display of curiosity, fantasy and



ethical speculation fascinated me, introducing me to the realms of the mind. For example, from Pat Martin's stories I got my first glimpse of the world of fantasy. I realized that his 'uneducated' mind was far richer and had a greater influence on my development than the rigid doctrines of my school teachers. He had the great power of combining a thirst for knowledge and a willingness to speculate on the unknown with a warm humanity. It was easy to join with him in the adventures of the mind and consoling to realize that the free, creative mind can overcome the harshest material and psychological conditions.

They say that the greatest spur to individual change stems from pain, a resolution to change and realization that change is possible. At the age of 16 I realized that the world of my childhood was too small, that the numbers of 'individuals' were too few and the predominant culture was not conducive to my further growth. My search for expanded horizons took an almost predestined Irish form, namely emigration. My exposure to English culture forced me to rethink many of my ideas and provided an opportunity for new ones. My life at that time was dominated by the needs of material survival. Without the necessary secondary education I was unable to take advantage of fulfilling and stimulating employment. My choice, apart from manual work, was limited, and my need to communicate brought me into selling, which was the best I could do at the time. The idea that it would be possible to escape my educational limitation was absent during this time, as the rigid idea that one cannot have a second educational chance was too strong to question. The opportunities to meet people who might have counselled otherwise did not arise. A 'make-the-most-of-it' attitude prevailed for several years. But more and more the



feeling that there must be more to life than this rose in my mind as the dis-ease with a hedonistic lifestyle increased.

The second exposure to new stimuli was during an 8 month period of travelling and voluntary service in Europe and North Africa. Then I met a variety of cultures and peoples providing me with a further opportunity to re-examine my ideas and attitudes towards life. It was at this time that I met several students and university teachers and through them I realized how great a handicap my lack of academic education was. The experiences of that time led me to further self-analysis. I began to appreciate the relativeness of ideas and developed a greater tolerance for the views of others. It was at that time that I first questioned the values of western culture with its excessive hedonism and fanatical materialism. Brian and Des were my travelling companions. Des had a major influence on my ideas, he challenged everything and everybody and had developed a very high degree of individuality. With him we visited art galleries, museums and ancient sites. One night in Tromsø we had camped in a cave overlooking the fishing port. We were commenting on the beauty of the town lights reflecting on the water, when suddenly nature presented the most splendid display, the aurora borealis. The sky was alight with a thousand magic colours, each shimmering, translucent and ephemeral. We watched awe-struck realizing the paucity of man and the wonders of nature and feeling the need for further experiences of oneness with nature. After further travels in Sweden, Spain, Egypt, Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy and Austria we returned to England.

Still hampered by educational neglect and unable to obtain a selling job I became a policeman. The need for a regular job



again took precedence over the increasing wish to find self-fulfilment in a life-style freely chosen. It took five more years (including two further years selling) to break the treadmill of a 'given' life-style and finally start to rectify the imposed limitations of my background. I stopped work and began full-time study at the College of Adult Education. For two years I led a life of material austerity but was genuinely happy. This was my self-chosen life and my mind was free to learn and explore as a highly motivated adult. The necessity to obtain 'O' and 'A' level qualifications was coupled with a desire to be a thinking human being and to discover the 'real' reality behind life's veneers and illusions. This was a time of pain as well as joy. The shedding of an old identity and the birth and growth of a new one is always accompanied by pain. But as Gibran says: "Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding." <sup>1</sup>

I encountered many people who counselled caution and discouraged me, saying that I was too old to start studying at the age of 28 and that I should be settled down. This advice saddened me, but it also made me more determined to prove them wrong. At least I wanted to attempt to change my life - I had nothing to lose. To have heeded them would have meant a lifetime of frustration, regrets and despair. "Most gulls don't bother to learn more than the simplest facts of flight, how to get from shore to food and back again. For most gulls it's not flying that matters but eating. For this gull it was not eating that mattered but flight. More than anything else Jonathan Livingston Seagull wanted to fly." (Richard Bach). <sup>2</sup> The person that wants to discover his true self must also break away from the flock and accept the positive and negative aspects of that



decision.

At the College of Adult Education and later at the University of Liverpool I had the privilege of meeting and knowing a number of creative lecturers and students. At the College of Adult Education I was particularly impressed by Ada Wightmore, the Art Lecturer. As a teacher she displayed great intellectual honesty; she encouraged students to think for themselves and by her example she broke down barriers of myopic segregation that too often exist between teachers and students. During lunch and coffee breaks at the college most of the other teachers sat together indulging in superficial pleasantries - their expressions often bearing the tired sterile look of years of conformity. Whereas at Ada's table like minds assembled together, and there were endless discussions and an air of enthusiasm. The influence of a good, creative teacher is of paramount importance in the development of creative students, for creativity like enthusiasm is infectious.

At the beginning of my second year at college I decided I would like to go to university and I had a variety of responses from my teachers. Ada was encouraging, other teachers' responses were largely negative. One teacher suggested that I should go to a polytechnic, as the education was more of a practical nature. Another suggested doing teacher-training without a university course. My history teacher, who had retained a lively intellect from his own university days, approved of my intentions.

One day I spoke to the admissions tutor at Manchester University. His response was totally negative and suggested that I should apply elsewhere. He said that there was no guarantee that I would pass my 'A' Level entrance requirements.



that year. I was particularly saddened by his curt dismissal as until then I believed that an educated mind was a more humane one. But the chains of conformity and emotional infancy tie the educated and uneducated alike. Each individual must seek escape through creative destruction and reconstruction of his life. Derailment from the accepted norms of an era is the first step towards creativity and true freedom. The self-imposed discipline of an autonomous individual is far more strict than society imposes, but it is far more purposeful and tailor-made for particular need.

At Liverpool University I had the opportunity to continue my education and there I gravitated towards the minority of creative lecturers and students. There I studied Politics for three years and the influence of another lecturer, Walter Little, was very important to me. He too sought to break down barriers that divide lecturers and students and academic disciplines. His lectures were fresh and interesting and he promoted individual thought: "Do not be overawed by the academic books you read; most of them are written by people little older than yourselves; and if you choose to do so, you are capable of writing similar books in the future." In the tutorials he looked for originality of ideas and critical views of plagiarists and 'safe thinkers' were expressed. Sadly, even at an average age of 18, the majority of the students were creatively retarded; they had been trained to pass examinations and not to think. They found it uncomfortable to change the habits of years, and disturbing to challenge their 'given' beliefs. It is tragic to see intellectual sclerosis in the young. I made friends with a group of students that represented several different faculties. The desire to think



for themselves was common to all of them.

After University I decided on a Law Course. This was considered a backward step by a few of my friends who feared that the law profession was not conducive to creativity. I disagreed with that view. However, a series of setbacks - financial difficulties and parental ill health - eventually forced me to choose another profession. In debt from the law course that I was unable to complete because of my father's illness, I saw my hopes of autonomous individuality slip from my grasp. Individuality is not a quality of value in the environment of my parents, that particular rural environment does not allow it. As soon as my father's illness was over and the work on the farm done, I escaped to England once more. There followed a couple of months of alienation before I began to tentatively consider where my future lay. During an 8 month period of exhausting manual work I felt totally uncreative and the abyss of my despair is probably reflected in a poem I wrote at the time: (one verse included)

The subconscious mind is fighting back  
It attempts to throw off the fetters  
It cries for relief from this hell  
Sodium vapour street lights emerge behind the building line  
Beacons that symbolize safety and offer hope.

I realized that I had concentrated too long on the problems of the world outside, that I should turn towards my own inner space, for there probably lies the clue to all creative development. The greatest blinds exist within our own minds and we must be aware of the limitations of words: "In much of your talking thinking is half murdered. For thought is a bird of space that in a cage of words may indeed unfold its wings, but cannot fly." (Gibran). 3





John's description of his process of growth indicates the importance of the need for the potentially creative or intellectual individual to follow his own intuitions, not being put off by the implied expectations of society or the advice of the unimaginative. His own unique experiences make him something of an expert in the field of 'blocks' to creativity. He stresses the help that he has received from a range of creative people, saying: "They are the beacons that challenge ignorance and apathy and despair, offering an exciting and worthwhile alternative. The Odyssey towards full human development would be impossible were their influence absent."

His path has not been an easy one. The photograph above shows the view from his farm in the west of Ireland - and it is the same through the whole 360°! It is from this wild and lonely remoteness that he comes, via a tortuous route, to Goldsmiths' College of the University of London, to train for teaching in September; even this may only be the beginning.



### Concluding Comments on Creativity and the Individual

It has been very interesting to have relatively long contributions from two individuals. Much of psychology has tended to be concerned with the general and the norm. People have often been used in order to aid the understanding of the characteristics of the species. But another aspect of study is concerned with a person in his own right as a unique focus of traits and experiences. With a subject such as creativity it would seem to be both arrogant and contradictory to stress the personal and original and then proceed with an account merely from the viewpoint of an observer. If the creative powers come from within the matrix of the inner self, then the individual should be given the opportunity to speak for himself. Education and therapy become significant for growth and development only when the teacher or therapist are able to listen.

The creative experience would seem to be a very complex process to unravel; involving intellectual exploration, the search for meaning, passionate convictions and the longing for autonomy combined with the welcoming of influences. The introspective traveller is often likely to discover that little can be made explicit about the process. Few artists will ever be able to say what the sources of their art are. Odilon Redon is said to have only smiled when asked to explain his pictures: "The truth is that one can say nothing about one's self. Nothing about what the hand brings to birth, at the anguished or passionate hour of gestation. It is often a surprise; one has simply gone beyond one's goal, that is all there is to be said." +



Outsiders - An Art without Precedent or Tradition

Arts Council of Great Britain 1979 Exhibition - organised by  
Victor Musgrave and Roger Cardinal - The Hayward Gallery, London

First let the Outsiders themselves speak:

"It's a feeling you can not explain. You're born with it, and it just comes out. That's you, and that's all about it. Perhaps I can see as clearly as I do because I ran away from school."

Scottie Wilson

"There's more art here than in all the museums in the entire country! Forget the Pyramids and the Mona Lisa!"  
 Clarence Schmidt

"Rules, restrictions and work torture people, kill them, quarter them, undermine them, deform them, crush them, rot them, mutilate them, bind them."  
 Francis Marshall

"I'm on the side of irreverence, insubordination, unrealism, the absurd, daydreams, madness, utopia, desire."  
 Mario Chichorro

"When I am working, I have the impression of being in another atmosphere than the normal one. If I am alone, as I love to be, I fall into a sort of ecstasy. It's as if everything around me were vibrating."  
 Augustin Lesage

"I felt that I was definitely guided by an unseen force, though I could not say what its actual nature was."  
 Madge Gill

"Natural man cannot be a mistake for himself."  
 Jano Pesset

"I had it in mind to do something big and I did."  
 Simon Kodia

"When you're on your own, you find your own thing."  
 Pascal Verbena

"If the impossible exists, I'm on its track."  
 Louis Soutter

5

The painter Jean Dubuffet was the first person to systematically collect Outsider Art just after the Second World War. He called his collection "l'Art Brut". Dubuffet holds the view that inspiration is not the special property of an elite. He sees true art history as a succession of revolts and heresies:



"Art does not lie down on the bed that is made for it; it runs away as soon as one says its name; it loves to be incognito. Its best moments are when it forgets what it is." 6

Outsider Art is not the same thing as naive or neo-primitive art. Naive art tends towards a specific style, whereas Outsider Art covers a whole range of styles. Outsider Art is not tribal art, the latter follows its own traditions with certain accepted norms for a given community. Again, Outsider Art is not a type of psychiatric art, although some Outsiders have had psychotic experiences and some have spent years in mental hospitals. The true Outsider is a highly individual character, following his own line, unconcerned about recognition, usually aware of inner visions and often almost untouched by culture. A few Outsiders may have had training as, for example, in art, architecture or literature, but they have been determined to resist conditioning and strike out along their own path.

Dr Leo Navratil, the director of an Austrian clinic, has shown himself to be particularly sensitive to independent types of aesthetic expression. He says that what we call originality may be regarded as the intensification of what is truly individual. He believes strongly in providing the absolute minimum of intervention in the creative process. He dissociates himself from the type of art therapy that imposes guidelines. According to this view therapeutic value arises from the atmosphere of non-constraint. 7

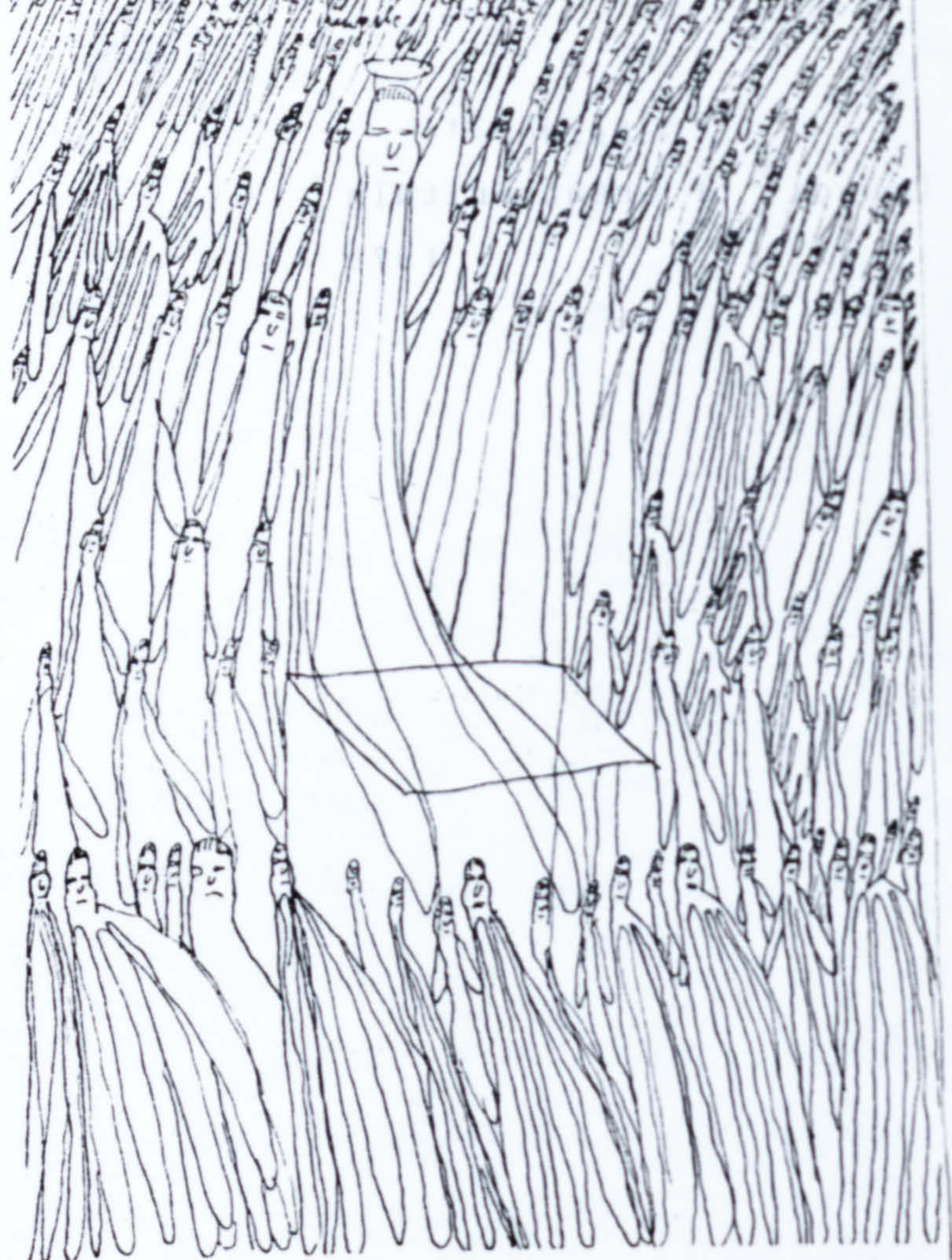
Turning now to the Outsiders Exhibition itself. It can only be said that, from a personal experience of five hours viewing over four hundred works, there was a deep feeling of wonder and amazement at so much diversity, inventiveness and vitality.

The art was displayed mainly in large, dark areas, with the

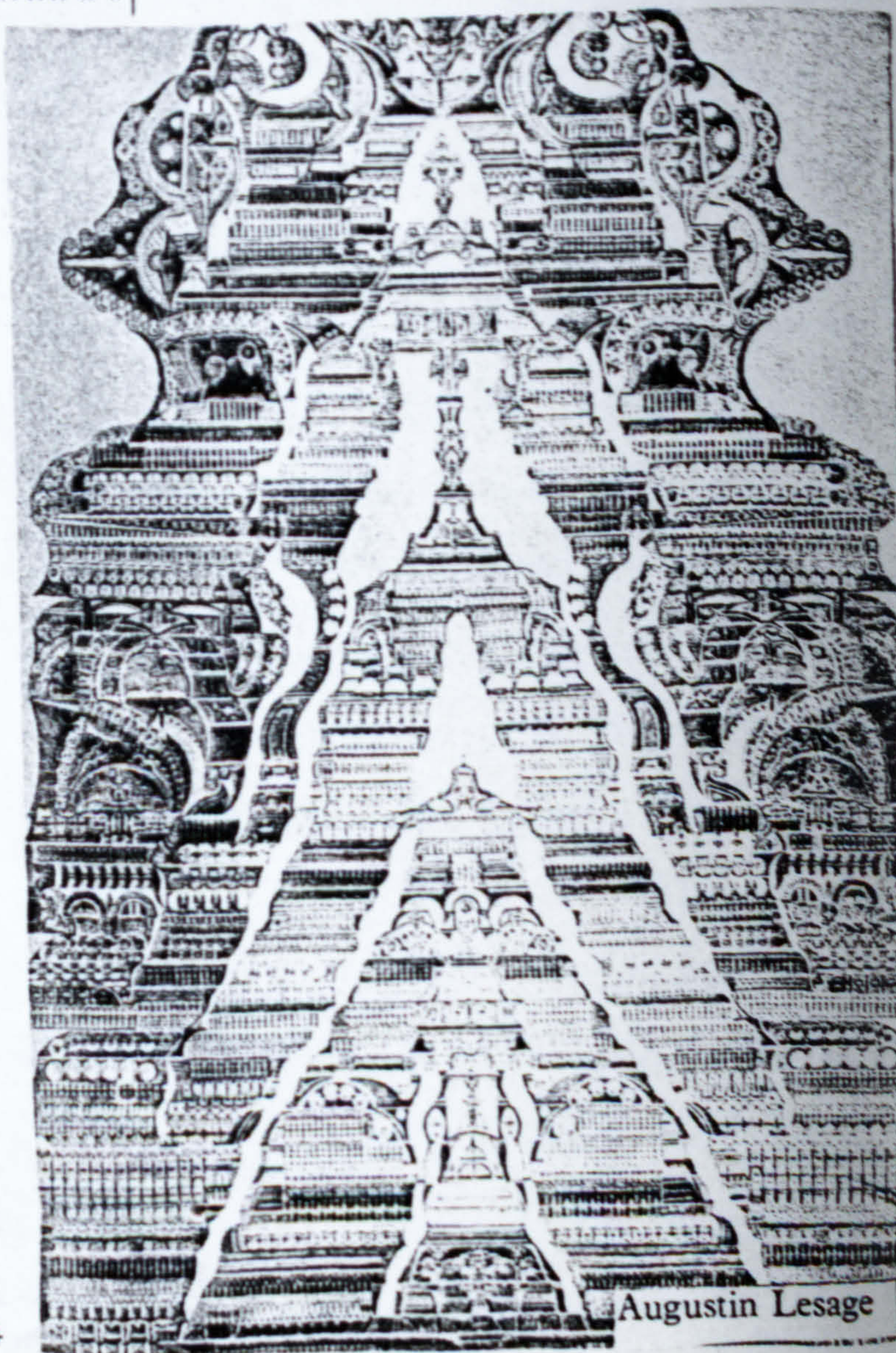


'Outsiders'  
Arts Council of Great Britain  
1979





Oswald Tschirtner 1920 -  
I'd like to be carried in a  
litter 1972



Lesage 1876 - 1954

Composition oil 1923 220x150 c.m.

Augustin Lesage



individual works illuminated in a focal way, thus giving a dramatic emphasis. Perhaps it would be of interest to refer to some of the artists making the most impact: There were the large-scale, colourful, operatic fantasies of Aloise, the Swiss governess. Her use of areas of flat colour contrasted strongly with the intricate linear style of Madge Gill. The latter's "The Crucifixion of the Soul", in inks on fabric, took fifteen paces to cover and consisted of over one hundred views of her symbolic face, a triumph of blended design. The dynamic and confident drawing of Johann Hauser, the war refugee from Czechoslovakia, may be contrasted with his own cold and geometrical work when in a depressive phase. It may also be startlingly contrasted with the unbelievable symmetrical complexities of Augustin Lesage, the miner from Northern France, who heard a voice telling him that one day he would become an artist. Lesage's compositions have a mystical quality and the controlled use of subtle tints of orange, yellow, vermillion, lavender and green can only be described as superb. The technique is excellent because it serves the expression.

Although many of the artists in the exhibition had lived through difficult experiences, one could sense the feeling of adventure that art could bring to their lives. Yoakum had travelled the world as a circus hand and stowaway. He began to draw after a dream that he called "a spiritual unfoldment" and his landscapes symbolically suggest that we are on a journey. There are twisting pathways through the mountains and a series of his pictures give the feeling of a floating dreamscape. Martin Ramirez was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. He was a mute and a withdrawn psychotic, yet his vast pictures, executed in crayon, convey the same quality of visual power as



'Outsiders'

Arts Council of Great Britain

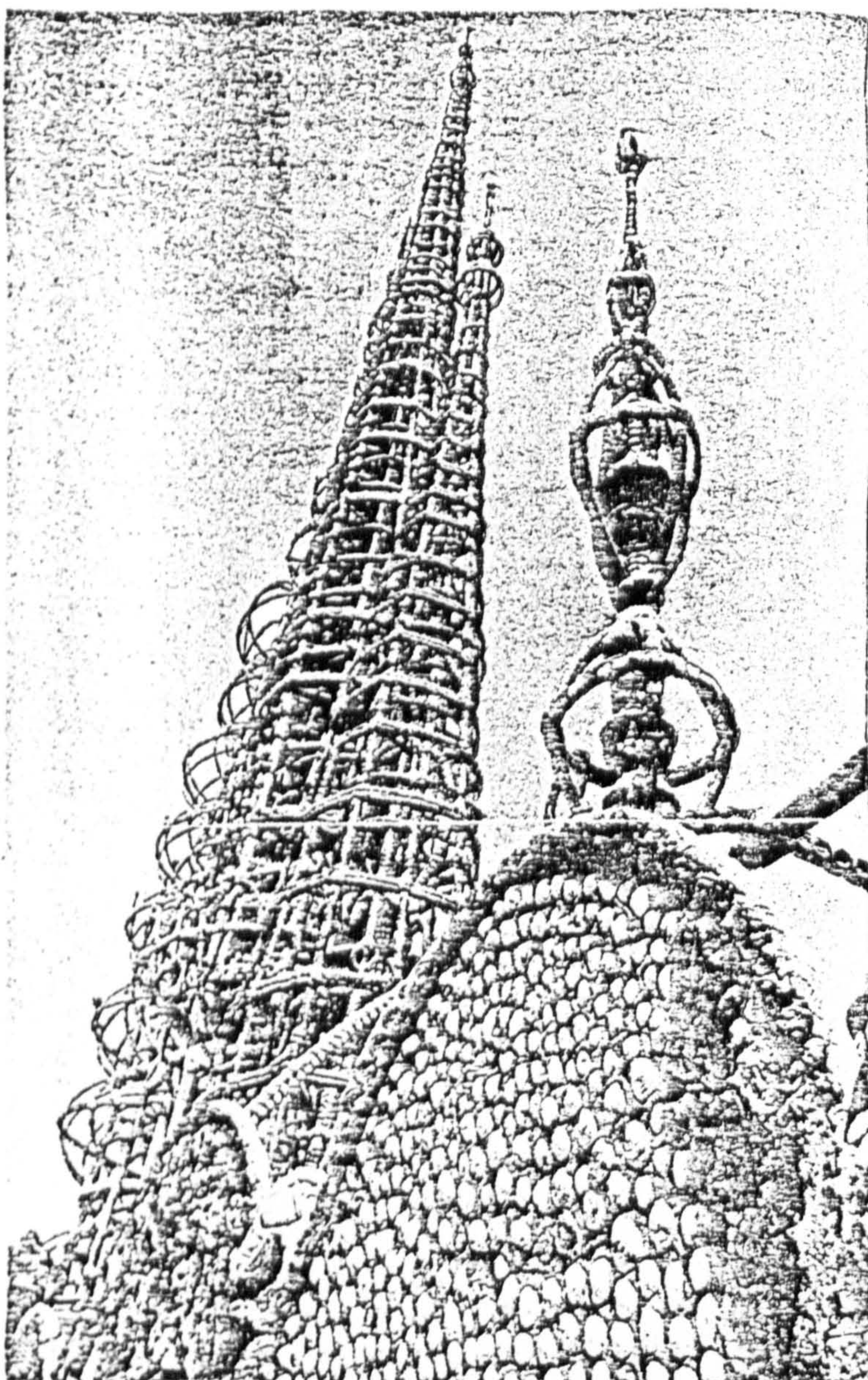
1979





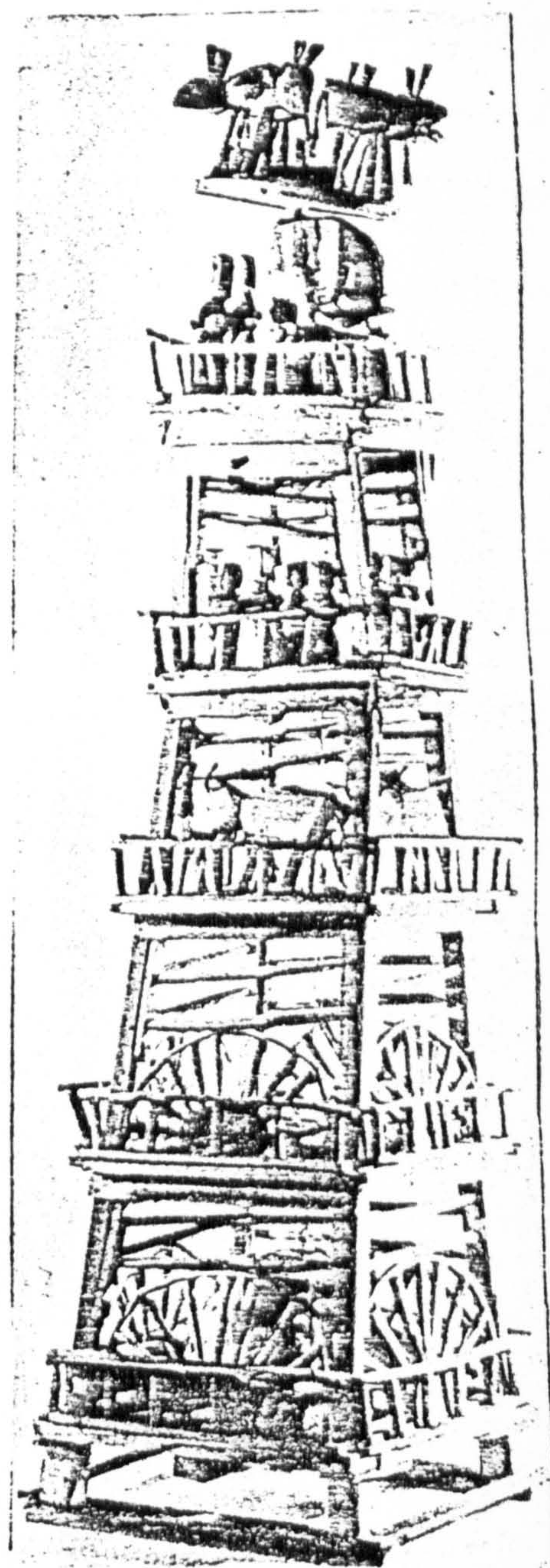
Madge Gill 1882-1961

Heads and Hieroglyphs



Simon Rodia 1879 -

The Watts Towers



Emile Ratier 1894 -

Eiffel Tower



a Bridget Riley painting. His trains and tunnels offer pure optical excursions. Henry Darger witnessed the destruction of an entire town by tornado in Illinois, 1913. He worked as a cleaner in a Chicago hospital and lived for forty years in a single room. He left behind an astonishing illustrated epic of war and devastation in thirteen handbound volumes entitled:

"Realms of the Unreal". Adolf Wölfli was committed to Berne asylum in 1895, where he remained until his death in 1930. He was often violent and after 1917 he was kept in a one-man cell. His cell was crammed with manuscripts and drawings and material for his fantastic autobiography. He liked to use coloured pencils to build up complex pictures suggesting such topics as: "Mental Asylum", "St. Adolf-Retreat, a Giant Town on the Star Zion" and "The Fire-Hammer-Snake". In 1921 he was the first schizophrenic artist to have a monograph devoted to him.

Turning now to the three dimensional work: The weird and colourful monsters by the architect turned Outsider, Alain Bourbonnais, suggest a fantastic and whimsical world: "The Duck on the Turbulated Tricycle" for example, and "The Marsh Bird" in wood, paper, fabric and lace. Monchatre is an artist fascinated by aviation and he has produced eccentric and ingenious machines from strips of metal, with such titles as: "Girocraft", "The Crazy Machine", "Propeller with ears on" and "So I can go anywhere I choose". Ratier, the French farmer, has made models in wood of strange towers, carts, bridges and wheels. Pascal Verbena, another craftsman in wood, is a French night-worker in a postal sorting-office. A former sailor, he loves to create from drift wood collected along the beach. Caroline Tisdall has described him well: "His boats and habitations bring together some of the most powerful archetypes of the haunted mind: the



solitude of the single figure in spaces that menace and threaten to close in on human fragility." 8 Jano Pesset is an interesting example of a social non-conformist: "He seeks in his work to magnify rejected experiences and to reverse the negative value of humdrum materials." 9 His cow in a meadow relief is made of ivy, bark and paint, it shows the internal aspect in a humorous way, though this may be unintentional.

Three 'environmentalists' should be mentioned, although one would really need to see their constructions in the actual place itself rather than merely the photographs: Cheval, was the French postman who spent thirty-three years during the last century building his "Ideal Palace" in limestone and cement. Simon Rodia, the Italian who settled in Los Angeles as a tile-setter and telephone repairman, also spent thirty-three years on his vision. He transformed his plot into an exotic garden with mosaic floor and walls and built fantastic towers of metal and cement, and then abandoned it in 1954. Clarence Schmidt is the New York plasterer and mason who created a seven storey "House of Mirrors" with a roof garden of found objects and mirrors and grottoes extending downhill. When the house was burned down in 1968 he built a second one having a similar fate in 1971.

And so one could go on, describing flamboyant and impossible motor cycles, sailing chariots, rag dolls and the art of Müller, the Swiss inventor of apparatus for pruning grapevines, who had a breakdown when his idea was stolen. However, something must be said about Francis Marshall, since his work seems strange even in an Outsiders exhibition. His Bourrages made of old rags picked up along the banks of the Seine look like 'Potato People', set in tableaux of rural furniture.



Walking up a dimly lit ramp at the Hayward Gallery from one part of the exhibition to another the spectator's shadow moves in front. It seemed appropriate that the rather strange and mysterious feeling conveyed by the exhibits should be reinforced in this disconcerting way. The shadow brings a person face to face with the self in a symbolic sense and this exhibition represented the individual reality. The problem is how to assess it. The 'Outsider' artists show spontaneity, vitality, personal intensity, imaginative power, inner vision and ambiguity, all factors associated with creativity. Where do they fit in? They cannot be regarded as entirely separate. After all, where do such artists as the German Expressionists, Van Gogh, Ensor and Jackson Pollock fit in if it comes to that? Where does any original artist belong until someone has invented an 'ism or label for him? Caroline Tisdall has made an interesting observation: "When the exclusive judgments of scientists and doctors are at last being opened up to question, it stands to reason that the same challenge should be directed against the professionals in art. Proof of creativity is certainly there. What is more elusive is a vision of how things should be, and that eludes the professionals too." 10



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## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **Creativity and the Community**



## Towards a Working Definition of Visual Art

"We must see art both as an expression of some inner mechanisms of one individual in relation to his environment, and at the same time as an aesthetic matter which deserves to have wide repercussions in any society. We all have some responsibility for the art within our own community, which means that at an individual, educational and group level, particularly in this chaotic world, we neglect art at our own peril."



N.W. Museum of Science and Industry

Mural Designed by Ken Billyard 1976

Painted by Walter Kershaw 1977



## Introduction

The first part of this chapter is concerned with the broader educational issues, developments that would be likely to assist the growth of creativity in the community; as for example, partial deschooling, informal methods of teaching and the idea of a free university. The second part of the chapter is devoted to the more specifically artistic projects usually described as community arts.

Go to the people,  
Live among them,  
Learn from them,  
Love them,  
Serve them,  
Plan with them,  
Start with what they know,  
Built on what they have.

Chinese Proverb.



## The Need for Partial Deschooling

Time is an important factor with regard to the development of ideas. Stimulation, some of it from other people, may be very helpful. But there must be the opportunity for quiescence, contemplation and exploration, in order that the incubation period may lead on to genuine, individual illumination.

Throughout this study reference has been made to this most essential requirement of the creative process. The need for the freedom to dream, think and explore has been stated in much of the psychological research on the subject; it has been mentioned over and over again by creative people and it has been noted, in a personal way, through teaching experience and through therapeutic situations with patients.

However, if we really value creativity, it is not enough to merely speak of the importance of time for discovery; it is necessary to nurture it.

One place in which to start is in the educational system. It is necessary to ask why children are held in schools for so many hours of the day, for so many weeks of the years. Much has been written in recent times of deschooling: One can admire, for example, the daringly imaginative ideas of Ivan Illich, Ian Lister and Everett Reimer.<sup>2</sup>

Given the present structure of our society, complete ways of deschooling may be difficult to achieve. If we abolished compulsory education completely we may move from the dangers of the stuffed person to the problems of the hollow one.

Perhaps we might begin with a compromise and introduce a pattern of regular attendance on mornings only. By this means a balance could be achieved between planned interaction and the opportunity for individual growth.



It is essential to begin by asking what schools are for:

If they exist in order to turn the child into a walking encyclopedia of all important knowledge, then they face an impossible task. Perhaps more has been written since World War II than in all previous recorded history. In any case who is to decide what is important for another individual to know.

If schools exist in order to shape and mould an individual to fit into society - Illich's 'hidden curriculum', then again they face an impossible task. The changes taking place and the changes about to take place are so amazing that moulding is the last thing a child requires. The very walls of the mould are in the process of crumbling!

If schools exist in order to prepare the child for a lifetime of work, then they are hopelessly behind the times. Perhaps the future, with all the wonders of automation, will not so much require workers, as human beings who sometimes work, and probably for short periods - a very different emphasis.

If schools exist in order to keep children off the streets, then this could be achieved by offering facilities of a child-minding nature. This could be achieved at far less cost than the present educational system.

Returning to the 'knowledge' aspect of the work of the schools. It may be accepted that there are certain basic skills and types of information that could be usefully offered. It may also be accepted that there are types of imaginative stimulation that children would welcome. This aspect of education could be fitted into the morning time-table, leaving the afternoons free for more flexible arrangements.

It cannot possibly be known just how creative children can be until they are liberated from a routine which says: learn



this, remember that, do this exercise, answer this question, turn to page so and so, and translate the following passage. If this goes on all day and then the homework follows a similar pattern, when does the child have time to think for himself?

Of course, it may be argued, that schools are no longer like this. Progressive, enlightened education is taking place, the children are seen as capable of taking part in projects and learning how to ask questions as well as answer them. Where this is so then a process is already underway that leads naturally to the kind of flexibility being advocated here.

Some schools are in fact already really resource centres. Some schools have one foot in the future. The changes that may be needed could well be achieved as much by evolution as by revolution.

As a consequence of leaving the afternoons free, not only would the children have time to follow up their ideas and pursue their hobbies: The teachers would also benefit. They would have time to prepare their morning programmes with far more energy and enthusiasm, offering wider scope and greater depth.

It is hoped that what Freire calls the banking concept of education would gradually disappear. According to this concept, the students are seen as the depositories and the teacher as the depositor. Instead of communicating the teacher 'makes deposits' which the students receive, memorize and repeat. The students file and store the deposits. There is no creative transformation of knowledge, no true interaction. Knowledge is bestowed as a gift.

Banking attitudes towards education help to maintain the oppressive society. The teacher talks, chooses and presents the programme, the students listen and conform. There is no probing,



discovery or exploration. The students are taught to be 'copy cats'. In the banking concept the pupil is a mere book-keeper of knowledge, never a producer or owner of knowledge. 3

If the teacher only sees the pupil as an object there is no true communication, only conditioning and indoctrination.

Illich likewise condemns the 'package' idea with education sold as a commodity.

According to Freire the revolutionary educator will not impose a programme on the students. He will first observe and learn and understand their problems. There will be a process of inter-communication. The programme must grow out of the needs and interests of the pupils. The significant word is dialogue. There is no dialogue without humility and love is the first essential of dialogue.

This process will become easier with more flexible educational arrangements. The 'free' afternoons, for example, would offer ideal opportunities for a whole range of situations.

It is not suggested that schools should bolt their doors at midday, only that the compulsory aspect should disappear.

Some pupils may wish to use the facilities of the school during the afternoon, others may visit the library, the museum or the art gallery. There may be optional group activities with the teachers.

One of the most outstanding people working along the lines of learner-centred teaching at the present time is the psychologist from California, C.R. Rogers. He has been able to transfer ideas relating to client-centred therapy to the educational situation. His message is that the teacher, or facilitator of learning, should drop the mask and become a real person capable of accepting, prizing and trusting the students.



In this way genuine, satisfying relationships develop that are the basis for growth and experiential learning. "If I distrust the human being then I must cram him with information of my own choosing, lest he go his own mistaken way. But if I trust the capacity of the human individual for developing his own potentiality, then I can provide him with many opportunities and permit him to choose his own way and his own direction in his learning." 4

Rogers is critical of many assumptions in the educational field, especially the over-emphasis on static knowledge. He points out that no knowledge is secure, only the process of seeking it. This approach is threatening to many institutions: "... original, curious, autonomous students, pursuing their own goals, are nearly always disturbing to have around. They challenge pet beliefs and fixed ways of doing things..." 5

Sometimes a person believing in learner-centred approaches has to work out a method that satisfies, as far as possible, the requirements of the system as well as his own personal idealism.

An interesting example of this is Dr. Volney Faw of America, working in the area of 'Undergraduate Education in Psychology'. For years he has shown that it is possible to combine freedom with academic requirements. He has gone further and shown that for most students the learning achievements are more worth-while than by the 'mug and jug' procedure.

Dr. Faw has planned the course around the student, so the course begins with the student. This would seem a logical way, especially in psychology: The introspective searching for motives and interests is itself part of the subject. The various projects, experiments and demonstrations are related to the questions arising from the student, they are therefore more



meaningful. It is better to have the opportunity to plan an experiment than for everybody to see or do the same thing. The emphasis is on the importance of being free to be oneself. This is carried over into the area of the teacher and the content. A teacher may 'sign up' to give a lecture, but this is done in the spirit of presenting ideas to encourage a spontaneous response. Even the evaluation is, to some extent, a shared experience.

Attempts have been made to study this work by comparing it with a respondent group. It is apparent that the freer methods are a means of stimulation. They encourage a far greater range of activities, from article reporting, field trips, interviews and research proposals. This would seem to be the way to get people working. It would also seem to be the way to train people to be open, creative and liberated from the stereotyped response. <sup>6</sup>

Some people might argue that this approach may be all very well with highly motivated adults, but have their doubts about extending it to children. But these methods should be started early in order to lay the foundations of self-directed study.

It is not suggested that didactic methods should never be used. Where the aim is to promote the recall of taught material, or to give a review of culture, the didactic method may be the most appropriate. Where the aim is to develop the learner's self-organising and creative resources and encourage initiative, then the student-centred approach is likely to be more helpful.

If learner-centred teaching is viewed in its widest sense, covering experimentation of all kinds, then education becomes very adventurous and wide ranging.



## Lifelong Education

Lifelong education is still at the conceptual stage. It is closely linked with ideas on deschooling: If society moves away from a set pattern of compulsory, formal education for children the tendency may well be towards the rethinking of education in lifelong and more flexible terms. Lifelong education may include both formal and informal patterns of education, planned as well as incidental learning.

According to Derek Legge: "Lifelong education is characterised by flexibility and diversity in content, learning tools and techniques and time of learning.

- Breakaway from monolithic, uniform rigid systems
- as knowledge expands and new skills develop, diversity in the content and form of learning increases and the process of learning becomes more individualised and self directed.
- geared to needs of a changing society it enables individuals to adapt and prepares them for creative participation in the process of change.
- allows for alternative patterns and forms of acquiring education eg. open universities, computer-aided instruction, 'learning banks', programmed individual learning, study circles etc." 7

Because the emphasis will tend to be on self-learning and self-reliance, lifelong education offers the framework for a whole lifetime of creative, individual development and expression. The conditions that may be thought ideal for original work of all kinds would be readily available through the process of continuing education. Motivation, choice of approach, freedom and opportunity for experimentation would all be considered in ways not possible under totally institutionalised systems.



# Free International University for Creativity and Interdisciplinary

Research \* See p. 358

The founders of the Free University are aware that in many established and traditional institutions there tends to be a separation of creative fields from social or scientific fields. All too often the notion of creativity is restricted to artists, architects and musicians etc. The term should be applied in its widest sense to encompass science, politics, economics and law. All too often "the reliance on accumulated fact within each discipline passes for education. The student is rarely called upon to develop an independent, organic or comparative model of thinking. He is insufficiently prepared either to make an imaginative contribution to his own field, or to relate it to the life of society." <sup>8</sup>

The separation of learning and research, the isolation of academic studies, the lack of dynamic interaction with the community and hierarchical structures are all criticised. One of the founding concepts stresses the idea that creation involves not only talent, intuition, imagination and application, but also the ability to shape material in such a way as to indicate how it may be extended to other socially relevant spheres. The dangers of an "Aggressive proliferation of standardised mass-culture" are noted and the warning is given that where imagination and intelligence are not allowed scope for expression the consequences may be harmful: "Criminality can arise from boredom and repressed and inarticulated creativity". <sup>9</sup> It is felt to be necessary to research the forms of violence, tracing them back to discarded hopes. In its interdisciplinary approach the Free University does not discount the specialist, only the notion of experts being the sole arbiters within their 'own' fields.



The concept of a Free International University is not a static one and may be continually expanded and developed. The structure may be formed around three principles: Reciprocity of staff-student roles; interrelationship of research and learning levels and open procedure. "By focusing on important contemporary issues which bring together all the related disciplines and comparative methodologies, the aim is not simply to provide a varied formal education but to encourage an awareness and responsiveness to social situations together with the flexibility of approach and creative imagination to transform and express them." <sup>10</sup> It is realised that the open procedure implies an involvement with other institutions and that progress of research can only be verified through a continual dialogue with the public. In fact the research should itself lead to an expanding network of contacts and relationships. It is a shared view of the founders that creativity is at the heart of their approach: "The potential of creativity is of direct social and political relevance and far exceeds the restricted area to which it has traditionally been confined." <sup>11</sup>

Ideally, the Free University will be a learning and research community open to the Public. It will see in cultural and political differences the opportunity for dialogue rather than barriers to communication. Thematic studies will lead on to seminars, workshops, projects, conferences and publications. The research workers will be in constant contact with the varying models of thought provided by different disciplines as they are practiced in different countries. There will be a sensitivity to the need to relate systematically gathered sociological data to broader creative interpretations and to the experience of the community. The Free University's aim is to develop a more organic model of



society with an interest in the catalytic.

In December, 1976 a Symposium was held at University College, London with about forty participants outlining research proposals and offering discussion papers. The topics covered such subjects as: Monitoring the Media; Migrants; Underdevelopment in Europe; Alternatives to Prison; Planning and Cultural Identity. Workshop topics covered Northern Ireland; Mime as a Community Medium; Women's Rights, Opportunities & Employment; Stereotypes, art and social practice and Interdisciplinary Research.

Many of these topics call for the bringing together of the economist, sociologist, anthropologist, historian, psychologist and artist.

One of the Northern Ireland workshops was called "Visual Documentation" and another being researched by Belinda Lofus was called "Tradition and Mechanics of Conflict Imagery in Northern Ireland". This could involve the exploration of the history of the various traditions in visual terms related to conflict. There could be specific recommendations about the ways of using visual imagery which might help towards the working out of some of the problems in the area.

With reference to Interdisciplinary Research, R. McDowell states: "Communication, exchange, fruitful and creative relationships are primary goals of the Free International University. A 'creative' approach should encompass more possibilities, drawing on all fields of thought, than today's increasing reliance on laboratory thinking and insular specialisation." 12

In April, 1977 an International Seminar was held at Palermo, and between June and October, 1977 a continuous programme of events was arranged within West Germany's international cultural occasion, namely Kassel Documenta.



## \* A Brief Note on some of the Main Features of the Free

### International University

1. No director, professorships or headships, policy decisions reached through student-staff discussions- democratic model.
2. Non-profit making, funds expected to come from the major foundations and from research. A board of trustees initially made up of those actively involved in the project.
3. Ireland in general and Dublin in particular selected as suitable for the location of the Free University.
4. The initial team to consist of staff and researchers built up around a group of people with relevant experience within the fields of creativity, education, the social sciences and the media. People prepared for long-term studies or specific projects:
  - J. J. O'Keefe who was Professor of Sculpture at the Dusseldorf Academy. A dynamic educationalist with a belief that education should draw out the creative potential of every person.
  - Francis Stuart an Irish creative writer.
  - R.D. Laing the author of "The Divided Self".
  - Nina Sutton, a French sociologist and journalist.
  - Tapio Varis an expert and critic of mass communication and the media.
  - Simon Hartog from the London School of Economics, the Royal College of Art and current affairs presentation on television.
  - Nena Dimitrijevic a Yugoslavian writer and organiser of international exhibitions.
  - R. McDowell, studied at the Belfast College of Art, the Slade and University of London. Founder of the Troubled Image group in Belfast in 1972 and researcher into the sociology of culture.
  - Caroline Tisdall, lecturer and Guardian writer and organiser of exhibitions.
  - And several more.
5. For the students, no age restrictions, no specific qualifications, but an interest in and knowledge of an interdisciplinary approach, no formal examinations, opportunity for research, workshops and field work.

### Recent Developments

4/6/79

Public discussions, meetings and research is carrying on in many places including Italy, Germany, New York and Belfast. The subjects ranging through economics, ecology, education and regional problems. In Belfast interest centres on the arts and media research. In Dublin there have been problems, partly related to funds and partly to difficulties in linking the arts with sociological research.



## Aims and Characteristics of Community Arts

Community arts are concerned with a process of art activity rather than with only a product. The process is to involve the people of a locality in action, not merely 5% but the whole of the population. Community artists are flexible in their approach and methods of working; tending to see themselves as catalysts rather than performers. They aim to stimulate local people to define their own problems, felt needs and areas of interest, eventually becoming their own community artists. Community artists become involved in a diverse range of activities, from mask-making to bringing colour to the drab brickwork of old school buildings, from the designing and flying of kites to performing in a carnival.

Community arts, as John Lane says, is creative social activity, energising and enriching both nomadic and centre-based work. <sup>13</sup> Krysia Nowak, operating in Sheffield, holds the view that if people are encouraged to be creative they will be less likely to be destructive. She believes in 'Open House at the Art Gallery' and welcomes people inside to paint. She also takes art out onto the streets of the city. One scheme is to have the public painting their own pictures on the hoardings. <sup>14</sup>

As stated by the Community Arts Committee: "Community arts are a means of change, whether social, psychological, political or educational within the community, and, as such, contribute towards community development and quality of life." <sup>15</sup> Sheila Yeger observes that from the outset community arts have been identified with a radical approach to social problems. The kind of solutions offered do not easily fall into the community action or 'artistic' activity categories, but may contain elements of both. <sup>16</sup>

N.B. In 1975 the Arts Council of Great Britain set up its 'Community Arts Committee' with special reference to the funding of community-based projects.



## Art and Involvement

As stated in Chapter II, the Royal College of Art held a two-day 'Multi media Art Fair' in March 1978. This was called 'Inside Out' and had four objectives in mind:

1. To provide the opportunity for the students to expand their work beyond their studios and College.
2. To help break down barriers between the schools and departments of the College.
3. To create an event that would be 'open', with the public invited to participate and many events in nearby parks.
4. The idea of an 'Art Fair' making use of 'outside spaces', could be seen as an alternative to the restricted gallery system.

'Inside Out', as well as providing bizarre and imaginative exhibits and performances, included a full programme of talks and films. It was felt that the event offered an outlet for creative energy and also stimulated a dialogue between the College and the public. 17

## Islington Schemes 18

Two mural schemes by Islington Schools Environmental Project are of interest here: The story goes back to the time when the artists Dave Cushman and Roger Ragin first met. They both taught on the pre-diploma course at St Martin's School of Art. They felt that the view of the artist's role implied by the nature of the course was too commercial. They began to explore ideas relating to group creativity. They worked, for example, with students in a school playground near St Martin's. Then, in 1974, they turned to the Laycock Primary School. They were employed as artists under an ILÉA special project fund. They were given a large studio and set to work involving children, teachers and parents in the process of transforming the play area around this Victorian school. The vast stretches of stark tarmac certainly presented a challenge to the imagination and ingenuity of all concerned. Then there were the plans for two murals to decorate two front



walls. The original proposal was that the artists should design and decorate one mural each. However, Cashman noticed that the ideas developed by the children were so exciting that he wanted to involve them directly. There followed an argument and it was decided to open the matter up for everyone to put their view. This attitude stimulated much interest and eventually the vote went for the children. From over 300 'brickwork' designs 16 were selected and the artists transcribed them onto the walls. In describing the process of artistic equality at work Su Braden has this to say: "Cashman had seen the crucial problem as being how to break down the barriers that prevented people being able to participate and share in the creative process. His main concern during the initial stages of the facade project was to explain how the system would work and to enable staff and children to involve themselves in the designs. The decision about whose work should finally appear then became something that had to be appropriate to the particular place in everybody's mind." 19

Before this project was finished Cashman and Ragin were invited to take part in the artist in residence schools programme and the ISEP was formed. In 1977 the Charles Lamb Community Project was established. The mural now developed was for a football pitch and children were asked by their teachers to make life-size paper cut-outs, silhouettes of themselves as spectators. These were to be drawn around on the wall and the children free to fill in the details. The ISEP is involved with improving the visual appearance of the school and with the development of workshops and recreational amenities for the community.



## The Hulme Community Arts Project

The Hulme Community Arts Programme has existed in its present form since March 1978, but it has grown out of the summer and Job Creation funded projects over the past few years. The Programme has two full-time workers, they are based in the Hulme Library and funded by North West Arts. 20

In May there was a week-long project in film-making in conjunction with the students from the Polytechnic's Community Art course. Over 70 Hulme children took an active part in the workshops in filming, makeup, costume, acting, playwriting, music and scenery making. The theme of the film was: "The Plague Hits Hulme". The summer activities consisted of six weeks of daily art workshops for youth. Each week centred around a different activity, such as, puppet-making, biscuit-dough murals, the creation of a carnival float, video TV, a trip to the Manchester Show and a performance in music and mime by a theatre group. The work also involves non-youth groups in clubs and churches, offering folk dancing and craft competitions. There is a recreational programme in Hulme which covers a Black Theatre Workshop, Drama Club for Age Ten and Up, Photography and Art Workshops and a Chess Club. On alternate Saturdays there is a Saturday Club at Hulme Library from 1 - 4 p.m., this is usually open to children, parents and all ages. During the autumn the activities of this club have ranged from kite-making and flying to mask-making. This latter activity was visited on November 4th:

### 4/11/78      mask-making

Between Hallow'een and Bonfire Night is a good time for the event. It had been previously advertised in the area by means of posters inviting children to come and make a 'monster' mask. During the morning the two full-time workers outlined the plans



for the benefit of three or four college student helpers. They said that around sixty children could well attend. Fortunately they had a very large room for the purpose. They had prepared a series of templates in card - cat, dog, bird, rat and pig - as starting points, but it was hoped that the children would not be over anxious to adhere to them, and that original designs would emerge. A variety of interesting materials were supplied, these included gold, silver and white card, felt pens, crayons, pipe cleaners, fabrics, tissue and crepe papers and foam for hair or whiskers and also coloured strings, beads and sequins.

When the children arrived there were certainly over fifty of them, many were around seven or eight years old, but some were even younger. They had a delightful afternoon cutting and pasting and decorating their masks. It was very noticeable that, although Hulme has something of a reputation as a problem area\* the children making the masks did not give any hint of this. They were well behaved, even quiet and girls and boys, a mixture of races and ages all got on together without friction. Towards the end some parents called and helped with the stapling. Some of the children were photographed in their masks. The atmosphere was informal and a number remained behind to clear up. Apart from the value of the co-operative experience, every child had created a lively or terrifying mask to take to the bonfire party.

\* Hulme is one of the largest housing redevelopment schemes in Europe. Basically completed in the early 1970s, it covers 350 acres and provides over 4,000 houses and flats. Hulme is a mixture of 'low-rise' housing, tall blocks, squares and courts surrounded by four-storey and six-storey blocks, and vast, sweeping crescents of flats with 'deck access'. The crescents are alarmingly uniform in appearance and built of unrelieved grey concrete. In this harsh and forbidding environment much of the vandalism that takes place must be seen as a cry for help. 21



## The Hospital Arts Project

### Background Information

The Hospital Arts Project is unique in this country. It was initiated in 1974 by Artist/Lecturer, Peter Senior at the St. Mary's Hospital, part of the Manchester Central District Hospital Group. In 1976 he was given a Gulbenkian Foundation/North West Arts award, later he was able to employ four young artists through the Government's Job Creation Scheme. In 1978 the team was increased to six. Their aim was to improve the environment of all the hospitals, health centres and clinics of this hospital group which includes, the Manchester Royal Infirmary, St. Mary's Hospital, the Royal Eye Hospital, Dental and Foot Hospitals and Barnes Hospital, Cheadle.

An Arts Centre has therefore been created for the whole hospital community of the Central District. The Centre's base, in St. Mary's Hospital, consists of studio space, a graphics room, darkroom and information office. The Arts Team provide a range of activities involving staff, patients and public, including exhibitions of paintings and prints, murals, mobiles, photography, sculpture, demonstrations, performances, slide-tape shows, poetry and concerts. The Team are available to offer advice and encouragement to staff and patients wishing to take part in creative activities. 22

### Visits to the Manchester Royal Infirmary and St. Mary's Hospital

24/11/78 & 6/12/78

Immediately on entering these hospitals the artistic displays conveyed a welcome. So often the endless corridors of such places are bleak and forbidding; but here a transformation had taken place making the atmosphere more friendly and less intimidating. Attention focussed on the paintings, photographs and



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The Rainbow Murals



prints - over one hundred of them circulating around the wards, corridors and waiting areas. Many of these works had been done by the Arts Team. There were colourful, exciting abstractions, relief structures in brightly painted wood, imaginative landscapes, serial pictures, as for example, spring to winter and non-figurative painting through realistic leaves and back to abstraction. There were amusing wooden cut-outs of animals, a clown and a cowboy. The original designs for these had been done by the hospital porter, and they served as direction indicators. An outside brick wall had been painted with flower designs and in front were real plants; the effect could be seen through the large picture window of one of the waiting rooms. The out-patients waiting hall was alive with pictures and collages and mobiles.

Perhaps the most interesting and spectacular project to be carried out recently is to be found on the ground floor of the M.R.I. Opposite the consultants' dining room are seven arches and they have become rainbow murals! The rainbow was chosen as a symbol of promise and good health and the shape was well suited for archways. Rainbows are formed from water and light, basic elements of life. Each panel depicts a different aspect of water and the associated living organisms. For example, fish and river, dolphin and sea, polar bear and ice, rain and plant growth and insects etc. The birds are particularly fine, one panel with the wild geese and another with scarlet ibis. All the seven murals were not completed at once. The Art Team wanted to please as many people as possible with this idea so they painted one and awaited comments from the staff and patients. At first some thought that the colours were too brash and might have an adverse effect on distressed people. However, it was found that such patients welcomed the changes to the corridors and enjoyed the



bright colours. Through the Manchester Area Health Authority magazine the staff are asked where else they would like to see murals. Other ideas that may be developed in the future include the development of a Japanese style garden in a courtyard, offering scope for the designing of lanterns; and also the possibility of large-scale sculpture in the outside areas - somewhere nearby these hospitals a gigantic mushroom, tree or giant may appear.

Children have been given much happier times in hospital through demonstrations, face painting, mime, magic, puppet making, film shows and kinetic playboards. Peter Senior has himself had experience of Manchester hospitals, both as a patient and as a parent when his children were ill, and he found the buildings depressing. Through a psychiatrist friend, he persuaded the area administrator to take him on as hospital artist.

The success of this project must be due not only to the high quality of the creative expressions; but also to Peter Senior's approach. As Su Braden has pointed out, he has integrated himself into the working structure of the hospital and concerned himself with the nature of staff problems and patients' needs. He has a vision of the hospital as a community involving intense relationships between patients and staff. "And he has used his skills as a painter to establish the concept of the extent of contribution creative expression can make to the quality of life in that community and context." 23

"There is no stiffening of backs or sense of 'here comes the outsider' as he enters the wards. He has made it his business to know the business of the hospital and to understand the priorities of caring for the sick...." 24 A ward sister has painted her own mural in the ward where she works. This is the kind of situation that has been created. Hospital workers who



would not otherwise meet - such as surgeons, plumbers and electricians - fraternise over art. A head porter is seeing to it that hospitals in other areas get to know of the project, through the meetings of his association. It is interesting to contrast the lively atmosphere of the infirmary outpatients' department with the Ancoats Hospital, Out Patients' Hall, painted by L.S. Lowry in 1952.

#### Recreational Arts for the Community 25

There is in Manchester a one year Recreational Arts for the Community Course. It is principally based at the Edgar Wood Centre. This building was formerly the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Its architect was Edgar Wood and the excellent tradition of the English Arts and Crafts Movement of the beginning of the century has been followed. It would seem to offer very interesting possibilities for recreational arts projects and especially for an experimental approach to drama and music.

The course is planned to cover the potential scope of Creative and Performing Arts and links art with social work. The course includes Art and Design, Drama and Theatre Arts, Human Movement and Music. Throughout the year one day a week is used for practical experience in community situations. There are also seminars and cultural visits. It is necessary for students to develop a flexible approach and be prepared to cross the traditional boundaries between subjects. They may select two Arts options for the major part of the course. It is of interest to people who wish to work in a situation outside the normal educational provision, such as hospitals, prisons, residential homes and community centres. The term community is used to describe a condition in which someone works with groups or individuals with particular interests, problems or handicaps. Attention is given to areas of social or cultural deprivation. Students may often need to improvise, bringing their practical skills and creative talents to informal spheres. The course is planned to utilize the special experiences of individuals.



## Dartington as an Ideal of the Creative Community

Dartington, Totnes, Devon, has a history going back to the medieval times. Dartington as an experiment in renewing the vitality of the English countryside goes back to 1925, the year in which Leonard and Dorothy Elmhurst purchased the Hall and Estate. The webs of influences from theories and individuals that provided the inspiration is a fascinating story. Leonard Elmhurst had previously studied agriculture at Cornell University, where he met Dorothy. He had visited India and set up a farm school for Tagore. Tagore himself visited Dartington and conveyed the idea of the Ashram, the centre of peace and light. It was part of Tagore's dream that there should be encouragement for the arts: "The practical work of craftsmen must always be carried out in partnership with the divine spirit of madness, of beauty, with the inspiration of some ideal of perfection....So in your Devonshire enterprise do try to attract some budding poets, some scapegraces whom no one else dares to acknowledge. You will be one of them yourself. Get some artists, too, to lend energy to your work. Nevermind how small the flame may be, provided they have enough of a gift to light the lamp, and let yours be a league of vagabonds." 26

Leonard Elmhurst was to realise, from his visits to India, that life and education could only become whole through access to as wide a pattern of experience in the Arts as possible, and through a rich cultivation of all the senses and the inner centres of consciousness. Many imaginative and contemplative people have brought a quality of personal richness to the Dartington experience: Bernard Leach, the potter and Mark Tobey the painter and teacher, both with an awareness of Zen; Imogen Holst with her school of music and Elizabeth Peacock, designer and weaver of the banners for the Great Hall, to name only a few.



Something should now be said about Dorothy Elmhirst herself. Her father had been a collector and lover of works of art. At the age of seventeen she inherited a fortune and soon began work in the slums of New York, where she struggled to understand the problems of poverty. Later, for a time, she turned to theory studying economics, sociology and psychology. She became involved with Woman's suffrage and with education. Then she married and went out to China. Her husband died towards the end of the First World War. Dorothy came to realise that the things of importance in life were, individual freedom, redistribution of wealth, tolerance and world brotherhood. Then she met Leonard and their lives converged. They both realised that the arts were essential to give a sense of completeness. So this briefly was the breadth of experience and understanding that this American philanthropist brought to the Dartington experiment. Because Dartington is a state of mind it could only have developed through people of vision.

Turning now to education: The Dartington School emerged as a progressive one. Life was seen as a creative experiment and every individual had to be respected. Education had to be seen as life and adventure, not merely a preparation for life. The educational philosophy upon which the curriculum was based gives a hint of this: "To release the imagination, to give it wings, to open wide the doors of the mind, this is perhaps the most vital service that one being can render another. So often we have attempted to stifle the dreamer for fear that he may never grow up a practical man, and yet it is to the men of imagination that we owe all that is greatest in human enterprise and discovery."<sup>27</sup>

Reference was made to art, music and drama; to projects and hobbies, the study of plants and animals and to the limitless



horizon of solitary thought and meditation. As Mark Tobey said:  
"The things you create here will in the end help create new and  
other states of consciousness within yourself." 28

A Summary of some of the Schemes and Enterprises Developed at  
Dartington

In 1926 the Elmhursts started the school with nine pupils and the Parsonage Farm began operations. During the pre-war period orchards were planted, textiles developed and a link formed with artists of the Cornish School. The Estate Laboratory opened, cider production started, there was a new textile mill and saw mills, craft studio, open-air theatre and School of Dance-Mime as well as an Arts Department. After the war there was the Adult Education Centre, the Arts Department was renamed the Arts Centre and from this grew the Dartington College of Arts, the Devon Centre for Further Education was opened as well as new buildings for the music school. There were developments in recreation and in vocational training and the College introduced its own music degree. Dorothy died in 1968 and Leonard in 1974 and Dartington is administered by The Dartington Hall Trust.





Dartington College of Arts

Department of Art and Design

Diploma of Higher Education

Art and Design in Social Contexts

Dartington College of Arts has recently set up this new course concerned with art and society. The intention is to explore new forms of practice in art and to question assumptions upon which art and art education are based. Students learn to work in the community themselves as artists and to assist others to participate in the arts.

As stated in the leaflet relating to the course: "The arts in our culture have for too long occupied an ambiguous and remote position. Our physical and social environments lack the richness, sensitivity and meaning that (in previous cultures) have been traditionally present, through shared involvement in the arts." This is a reminder of the importance of a culture emanating from the community as described in Chapter I, as for example, with reference to the Indians of the Pacific Northwest.

The two year course covers the following areas of art in relation to society:-

1. Art and experiencing - the focus on sharing of ideas, of making individuality social.
2. Art and the symbolic - concern with the receiving end of art and other cultural phenomena, e.g. the media, clothing, ritual.
3. Art and people - the focus on art as a means of relating to other people.
4. Placements - the application of themes to particular places.
5. Self-directed - the development of each student's own approach and motivation.



The course attempts to relate the practice of art to society. The following are some of the ways in which this theme can be understood:

1. Art as a means of personal realisation and the possibility that this could be available to all. Specific applications of this idea in therapy and education.

Learning to work creatively with others.

2. Art as creative communication: the idea that the social role of art is that of formulating and extending a shared reality.

Questioning the homogenised reality that is presented via the mass media and advertising and the centralisation of culture that this entails. Looking for possibilities to reverse this via decentralised media, and studying the way in which our idea of reality is influenced by images in the press and television.

Investigating popular culture, its forms and themes.

3. Art as awareness - compensating for the alienating and abstract quality of industrial life by enabling people to make contact with their own feelings and sensations.
4. Questioning the current conventions surrounding art, which involve commercial exploitation, the cult of artistic genius, excessive stress upon competitive individualism and specialism, over emphasis on the authority of museums, critics, etc.

Considering the role of producer and audience in art and the effects on art of the mass produced image.

5. Finding new ways of incorporating the production of art into everyday life.

Investigating the new emerging forms of community art involving: community murals, festivals, video, photography, etc.

6. Looking at the way the art of any historical period relates to the social context in which it was made and influenced that context. How all art incorporates a world view explicitly or implicitly.

Comparing the function of art in ancient cultures with that of our own and how art relates to magic, ritual, myth, dream, fairy tale, in providing a sense of social and psychological order.

7. Finding out how we could collectively influence the physical environment.

Investigating the possibility that design could spring from the aspirations and requirements of people and communities rather than from commercial pressure or bureaucratic imposition.



## Arts Centres

Dartington Hall, in seeking to form a bridge between the creative artist and the community as far back as 1925, was really a pioneer of the arts-centre theme. There are now probably several hundred arts centres in the country and the number has risen steeply over the last six years. John Lane refers to a number of paired characteristics of arts centres within a continuous spectrum, noting that: "process and product, art and community historic patronage and the contemporary artist, individual participation and collective involvement are inextricably meshed." 29 One may ask what people were seeking from these centres and John Lane describes the influence of Jim Haynes. Acting as a catalyst of the changes taking place in the late 1960s, he opened the London Arts Lab in Drury Lane: "The London Arts Lab cast a spell over thousands of young people who were searching for non-established forms of expression. It demonstrated the validity of self-determining democratic processes and the central, overriding significance of 'doing your own thing'. The idea of open access, the fluid use of interchangeable spaces, the relaxed mixture of cultures, the informal encouragement of every kind of personal creativity, were all forged and validated there." 30

Now there is a great diversity of emphasis with reference to the arts centres that are emerging: Elements such as art experience for personal growth, for education and for increased awareness and perceptivity may be observed; sometimes balanced by the therapeutic and social aspects and a feeling for the local needs. There is also variety in the type of buildings that are used, ranging from town halls to sheds, from churches to purpose designed centres. Within the buildings themselves the range of 'work' carried on may call for theatre and restaurant, studio and disco.





Durham Light Infantry Museum and Arts Centre



Patrick Heron Dark Violet With Orange Panel 1971-75



## The Durham Light Infantry Museum and Arts Centre

The hybrid of a regimental museum and arts centre is unique. The building is situated within the grounds of County Hall in a delightful setting of informal garden and stream. It was opened in 1968 and the Arts Centre was officially opened by Miss Jennie Lee in 1969. The Centre provides a permanent site for the showing of temporary exhibitions. It is also a meeting place for locally based societies, groups and individuals interested in the arts. It aims to respond to the ever-changing needs of the local people.

The January to March, 1979 Colour Programme may be taken as an example of its method of approach, as shown by the visit of Sunday 25 February:

- a) The Exhibition - Colour 1950-1978
- b) The Workshop - Colour Conscious

Turning firstly to the exhibition: It was concerned with colour freed from descriptive associations. Prints from Cezanne, Van Gogh and Monet led the public gradually towards this theme. Prints of the late cut-outs of Matisse indicated the joyful and vibrant qualities of colour. There were three hand-coloured lithographs by Howard Hodgkin and a series of screen prints by Patrick Caulfield related to the imagery of poetry. The paintings included Matthew Smith's "Still Life with Green Background", Jeremy Moon's "Green Sound", Philip Ward's "Ethiopia" and Paul Huxley's "Untitled 147". Of outstanding interest were Patrick Heron's "Red Still Life" from 1955, "Mainly Ultramarine and Venetian" from 1966 and "Dark Violet With Orange Panel" from 1971-75. Bridget Riley's latest painting "Song of Orpheus IV" made a subtle impact. William Varley described it as follows: "... an orchestration of undulating bands of orange, blues and greens which optically mix so that forms appear to materialise, intensify



and diminish behind a mirage of greys hovering above the surface."

There were also paintings on display by two artists living in Newcastle, Paul and Tony Smith, the latter's "Four People Talking of Camden Town" was particularly vivid. In addition there were colour photographs of cars in New York, taken at night under "High Crime Light". Reinforcing the friendly atmosphere of the coffee bar were a series of lively lino prints.

The Colour Conscious Workshop - Sunday 25 February, 2 - 4p.m.

Tutor: Mark Humphrys.

This was described in the events calendar as: "A creative workshop for adults interested in exploring new possibilities with colour."

There were 12 people attending the workshop, as this was the maximum number for using the equipment and space. There were also a number of observers and people looking round the exhibition showed great curiosity in the activities.

Mark Humphrys had arranged for four overhead projectors. He had also brought along pieces of coloured film, paper, chocolate box trays, textured glass and metallic grids. He demonstrated the power and vitality of colour very convincingly by means of a projector and his samples thrown against the white walls. He stressed the influence of one colour on another, drawing attention to the 'area of action' where two colours meet. He noted the influence of white space between colours, and of the impact of colours along a jagged line. Reference was made to the power of yellow to make itself noticed in small areas relative to the darker tones. Subjects such as the influence of overlapping zones, opaque versus translucent, emphasis in relation to the basic picture shape, broken and floating areas of colour, the



sensation of depth, as of looking into a rock pool and the possibilities in asymmetrical composition were all noted. Use was made of paintings in the exhibition to illustrate certain points. But most important of all, Mark Humphrys said: "Now you can forget about rules and let your intuition take over!"

At this stage everyone was eager to participate. Four groups of threes were formed around the projectors and experimentation with the various samples began. The results were immediately satisfying, the ever-shifting colours emerging on the walls suggested ripples, radiating forms, biological structures and symphonies in red and purple.

During the second hour some people continued to explore this approach to colour, ultimately giving a composition more permanent reality through translation into coloured paper. Others took up positions in another room, also using brightly coloured poster paper. They were asked to look at a picture, such as a Patrick Heron, and imagine a cut off line, then imagine how they would have developed the picture themselves from this line. They were able to find a blank wall or pillar on which to staple their shapes in view of the original picture. Others again chose to build up their coloured shapes in response to poetic prose, a paragraph from James Joyce's "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" :- "The last day had come. The doomsday was at hand. The stars of heaven were falling upon the earth like the figs cast by the fig tree which the wind has shaken. The sun, the great luminary of the Universe had become as sackcloth of hair. The moon was blood red. The firmament was as a scroll rolled away. The archangel Michael, the prince of the heavenly host appeared glorious and terrible against the sky. With one foot in the sea and one foot on the land he blew from the archangelical trumpet the brazen death of time. The three blasts of the angel filled all the Universe. Time is, time was, but time shall be no more."

The appropriate music from Alun Hoddinott, suggesting "The Sun the Great Luminary of the Universe" was played to give the



corresponding feeling in sound.

On asking about the usual occupations of three of the workshop participants, one said that she was retired, another was a B.Ed. student and a third regarded art as a way of life. So much was happening during the afternoon that it was impossible to see everything. However, the feeling was conveyed that there had been a steady flow of people through the Centre, and that the experiments with coloured light and paper had given an added dimension to their appreciation of the exhibition. Some of the visitors talked to the participants and to Nerys A. Johnson, the Keeper-in-charge, who was much in evidence to offer a welcome and encouragement. Some of the visitors were children and they had had the opportunity for their own colour workshop the previous day. Some visitors were boys who may have come initially to see the guns and uniforms downstairs and found their way to the exhibition of colour later.

Mark Humphrys said that he was planning to take a van round the surrounding villages in order to get the communities in the rural areas interested in the arts. He particularly wanted to see parents and children taking part together.

Apart from the observed programme, other activities had taken place during the period of the exhibition: For example, video art films and Ken Gray's Electrocolourscape, a new installation of sound/colour fluorescences, offering the opportunity for people to make their own sound and colour combinations. It was interesting to learn that Bridget Riley had visited the exhibition, and that Patrick Heron intended to do so. Also worthy of note, Durham County Library had produced a 17 page booklet listing selected reading on colour and art.



## The ICA

The Institute of Contemporary Arts provides an interesting example of an arts centre. The Nash terraces in the Mall were converted in 1968. In certain areas of the building there is a contemporary feeling and in other parts the cosy atmosphere of a social club.\* The programme is advertised as Gallery, Cinema, Theatre and Events and there is much to see and explore. During April and May 1979, for example, there was the exhibition: "The Art of the Invisible" and a series of lectures in conjunction with this subject were organised in association with the London University Extra-Mural Department. These ranged from "Mondrian and Theosophy" to "The Tibetan Approach to Mind" and "The Kingdom of the Invisible" by Cecil Collins, followed by the film of his work. In contrast, there was the opportunity to see "The Running Fence" by Christo, or at least to see a documentary exhibition of models, samples, drawings, sketches, collages, engineering diagrams and photographs of the 24 mile long nylon curtain which wound its way across the hills of Northern California.

Christo holds the view that a work of art is not necessarily only the end product. With environmental art such as the Running Fence, Christo sees all the people involved in the project as being a part of the work of art. This could mean the people who flew the helicopter carrying the steel supports to those who spoke at the protest meetings because they owned land in the area. There was a one hour film showing the whole development from the first idea, through to the plans and the events that made up the total artistic project.

\* The public may obtain full or associate membership of the ICA through payment of the subscription fee - or day membership may be obtained through payment of 25p.





Christo: Running Fence 1972-76

Sonoma and Marin Counties

State of California

Height: 18 Feet, Length: 24 Miles.

A day at the ICA may now be visualised, with the opportunity to see, for example, two exhibitions and a film, also some video films; then time to browse in the bookshop and have a meal in the restaurant. For the member staying later there may be conversation in the bar, followed by an evening lecture and discussion in the seminar room, or another film or a play.



## Summary

Since creativity comes from within an individual, it is therefore impossible to predict its expressions with any degree of certainty. However, situations that are flexible in terms of space, time and psychological approach, informal and free from structural rigidity, are likely to encourage independence, self-motivation, open-mindedness and enthusiasm. It is against this kind of background that creativity is most likely to emerge. The creative traits and the features of the creative process are in line with such situations. When a growing edge develops along experience an invitation is given to the processes of discovery and exploration. This chapter has aimed to point out that certain aspects of creativity are capable of finding expression through sharing, dialogue, community feeling, participation and involvement. Some people are capable of acting as catalysts and barriers may be broken down between artists and the community.



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Conclusions, points of interest and significant ideas relating to each chapter, followed by the general conclusions.



From Chapter I

1. The traits associated with creativity are fluency, flexibility and originality. The creative person tends to be divergent. He regards thinking as an adventure rather than a routine.
2. The main stages of the creative process are Preparation, Incubation, Illumination and Verification.
3. It is in the nature of the creative process that elements of surprise, irrationality and ambiguity should be welcomed.
4. As regards the appropriate conditions for creativity: To some extent these may be unique to the individual. It is therefore necessary to encourage the individual to discover for himself his own ideal conditions.
5. Certain elements of anxiety are naturally a part of the creative process, but situational frustrations may divert energy. Attitudes of permissiveness and acceptance are therefore important.
6. Nothing inhibits the flow of creative ideas more than criticism. Evaluation belongs to a later phase.
7. The advice of keeping to the familiar and aiming to reach a solution as soon as possible tends to act against the 'open' attitude necessary for creative thinking.
8. The bringing together of apparently irrelevant elements and thinking in terms of analogy may be important.
9. In recent studies of the brain there is an awareness of the significance of the right hemisphere and of interaction between both halves, rather than too much emphasis on only the left brain.
10. Artists may profit from psychedelic experiences. However, drugs can only provide a spring-board, the individual has still to make something of it himself.
11. On the subject of perception, perhaps there is no such thing as an object as it really is. Perhaps each person forms his own image. Experiments in modern art may be important as ways of extending the boundaries of the possible.
12. Embedded in the esoteric wisdom of the East is to be found



the idea of the creative power of the mind through concentration and contemplation. .

13. Concepts of time, space and consciousness are becoming immensely enlarged. A number of artists associated with pioneering the modern movement in art were aware of the unconscious, the spiritual and the occult. Artists face the continuing challenge to convey cosmic images.
14. Creative people cannot easily be conditioned, they therefore present a threat to dictatorships and authoritarian systems of all kinds.
15. Some light is thrown on the nature of creativity and the creative process by looking at what highly inspired individuals or their biographers have to say: Van Gogh wrote: "At the point where you drop the description the real throes and anguish of creating begins." Paul Klee wrote: "Art does not reproduce what we see. 'It makes us see.'"
16. The creative process may be discovered through archetypal forms. The Mandala, for example, may be regarded as an orientation map. Because the Mandala implies a relationship between man and the cosmos it points the way towards a fundamental harmony. The image of the Great Goddess has a deep meaning with reference to infinity and the creative unconscious.
17. Creativity may be studied as it finds expression within a specific locality or culture. As an example, the way of life of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest has provided amazing scope for involvement in the visual arts; cultural unity offering a framework and a stimulation for originality.
18. In the field of art education Ken Rowat may be quoted: "Whatever art might be, one thing is certain: it cannot be directed, planned, confined or measured."



From Chapter II

1. Provided the approach is flexible examinations need not kill the creative spark. Of course everything depends on the nature of the examinations and what the examiners are looking for.
2. Teaching art is really teaching for freedom. If you want the unexpected to happen its no use over-structuring or the predictable will occur.
3. There was evidence that an exhibition running in the main hall was proving to be a source of inspiration:-'Bernat Klein-the designer and his work.' Arranging for high level types of stimulation is important for the building up of a truly creative atmosphere.
4. A student's description of the ideal art studio as a palace of peace and serenity is significant.
5. The nature of overt teaching in art and where it should be fitted in is a matter for individual colleges. Solutions in this area can only be temporary ones and subject to the need for continuing review.
6. It seemed pedagogically correct to see the students as travellers on very personal journeys, requiring advice and guidance rather than directions.
7. If a student wants to become a designer, using for example, wood, metal or clay, he needs to understand that the imaginative aspect is only part of the task. Actually producing the object requires hard, dedicated work.
8. A tutor said that he often advised students to avoid developing along a straight line, to be prepared to adventure round corners and welcome ambiguity. This must be very important with reference to creativity.
9. An open-ended situation is always vulnerable to abuse and sometimes is abused. The ideology stands or falls on the basis of the self-discipline and self-enquiry of the students. But authority is the negation of creativity.
10. The interview panel: They seemed to be looking for a high degree of independence, for people on the edge of discovery



who would establish their own mode of creative expression.

11. New variants of creative ideas may be expected to emerge from students studying ways of integrating the arts.
12. A large, old house outside the campus offers an ideal type of retreat for fine art students. An environment in which they may become completely absorbed, finding peace, informality and inspiration.
13. Joanna Digger, who combined mathematics with poetic feeling in her sculpture, said of her work: "So it is a private search, the stages of which I reveal in outward form for anyone to interpret in their own way." Perhaps this is the essence of the creative process.
14. A student at the RCA stressed the power of the unconscious and spoke of the way colour seemed to take over and have a life of its own in his pictures.
15. Takae Horton sums up the value of enlightened art education in a delightful way: "I would like to thank the great characters who let me study in my own way. And I am happy thanks to the protection of my mountain Gods."
16. Jakes said that he thought the best method of encouraging creativity would be to select people with high creative potential and offer them a sympathetic environment in which to unfold.
17. John said that he thought art was about tension. He took the view that if an artist wishes to achieve anything he must become obsessed, unbalanced, weighted in one direction, not necessarily psychologically disturbed.
18. With reference to fine art, Ken Rowat says that we should expose the students to a constant flow of ideas and visual experiences.



From Chapter III

1. It is important that teachers give encouragement to the imaginative interpretations of experience and take divergent tendencies in their stride.
2. Harold Kugg puts in a plea for nothing less than a revolution in the education of teachers.
3. Strategies of a dynamic and creative nature may be observed in students at all stages through procedures to the goal.
4. E.W. Eisner has noted that creativity in art does not seem to be characterised by any simple unitary trait.
5. According to Torrance, creative learners learn by searching, manipulating, experimenting, even playing around.
6. The teacher needs to provide a range of potentially enriching and stimulating experiences in order that the student may select and modify according to his needs.
7. A tutor has observed that the best way of encouraging the creativity of students may be through being provocative and challenging. This sometimes means using brainstorming techniques. It means encouraging a whole range of possible ways of developing and elaborating the initial idea.
8. Students learning to be teachers of art need to think about how and under what conditions creativity occurs. Then they should consider if these conditions can be created for educational purposes.
9. Creativity may find expression over a period of time by exploiting the pattern of variations on one particular theme: in the case in mind, "The World of Insects".
10. Art should not have to be justified as a part of the curriculum. It should hold a central place in education from which the inspiration it engenders may have significance for other subjects and other lines of enquiry.
11. It is not always possible to predict artistic potential from the first attempts at painting. Students need time to grow, discover and develop. It is better not to close doors against them by a hasty evaluation of their powers.
12. There has to be an element of uncertainty in art and this



should be enjoyed.

13. Teaching-students ought to collect examples of the ways in which artists have developed. They will then be in a better position to offer imaginative situations to their pupils.

#### From Chapter IV

1. Factors such as creativity and spontaneity are increasingly being appreciated as important in behaviour. This is influencing theories and practice in education and leisure.
2. The computer and the robot are in the process of transforming society. Leisure is becoming significant for people in general, perhaps for the first time since the food gatherers and hunters.
3. The 1000 hour working year may be only just around the corner.
4. It is important to look critically at the whole creative process, before, during and after the creative act. It is helpful to take the introspective approach and ask: How do I experience myself during these three stages?
4. The 'blocks' to creativity should be considered: these may include authoritarian, rigid and hierarchical situations; critical attitudes; conflicting pressures; lack of stimulus; feeling tired; time pressures; inhibitions; anxieties and obsessional disturbances.
5. The creative person has to be able to tolerate doubt and accept the risk of expressing something new.
6. If the dynamic force is not channelled along creative lines of expression the consequences could be disastrous.
7. Creativity is concerned with receptivity and awareness as well as with expression.
8. Working days are concerned with the continuation of a theme, 'resting' days may generate new themes. Working days are often predictable, resting days unpredictable.
9. Every individual has to discover his own unique world.
10. The feeling expressed in a picture is another way of saying something about the self and its environment in time.
11. The great masterpiece often shocks because it is a rebellion



against accepted systems of working.

12. Advice to people who think that they have n't a spark of creativity may be to go out and do some direct seeing. If they feel overwhelmed they might begin by finding a brick or turning to the back of their own thumb.
13. "There is a growing feeling that our model of the universe has outlived its usefulness and that we are groping towards a new world-view which reflects a greater balance between the spiritual and material, the intellectual and non-rational, the feminine and masculine, quality and quantity, equilibrium and growth, meaning and knowledge. We are seeking patterns that connect, rather than abstract categories which dissect." (Dartington Conference).
14. Education has been too much concerned with the left brain. More opportunities for activities related to the function of the right brain and the whole brain are necessary.
15. Bridges are important, not only between the two halves of the brain, but also between consciousness and outer space on the one hand and the unconscious and inner space on the other.
16. Getting in touch with where physics is going leads to dreams, altered states of consciousness, inner space and cosmic art.
17. There is a need for 'New Age' ideas: awareness of consciousness as fundamental, radical thinking and changes in structures, elimination of barriers, interchange on a global scale and energy linked with hope and vision.
18. We have to remould the world in order to express what we are becoming.
19. Cecil Collins says that if we lose touch with the archetypes we will become imprisoned in their echoes, leading to fragmentation and madness. He expresses the view that we are at the beginning of a new age - the new art faces the rising sun.



From Chapter V

1. A. Bader sees in the pictorial work of psychotics a mirror of the human soul: "The schizophrenic reproduces not what he sees around him but what exists inside him."
2. The feeling, typical of the paranoid schizophrenic, of being attacked on all sides, may be depicted as a furious battle of figures on horseback, surrounding and closing in on one central figure.
3. Paintings often reveal the remarkable range and reserves of the mind at times of stress, as noted by Joyce Laing.
4. In art therapy there is a need to keep interference, and sometimes even suggestions, to a minimum.
5. People as a whole require education concerning the acceptance of variety. The unusual individual often feels threatened. There is an expectation of conformity, but the creative person is inclined to say why? conform to what? who decides? Often the conformity is meaningless, or merely convenient bureaucratically.
6. There is something wild and inevitably unpredictable about the creative process.
7. Roger Cardinal says: "For creation that is truly inventive, that genuinely stimulates passion, will be creation springing directly from the original sources of emotion and not something tapped from the cultural reservoir."
8. It is interesting to note that although original art is individual, it also seems to have a link with the universal.
9. Creative art can help to integrate the various aspects of life and the inner and outer experience, hence one of the reasons for its therapeutic value.
10. It is a certain magical quality related to the desire to break the mirror and get behind the facade that provides the imaginative artist with a link with the schizophrenic.
11. It is as if the personality of the schizophrenic has been shattered, fragmented into a thousand pieces, and yet it is radiating a message - perhaps we should listen.
12. J.H. Plokker says that there is need for caution with regard



to dogmatic statements concerning the characteristics of schizophrenic art; the same applies to interpretations of colour symbolism.

13. Prinzhorn, writing in the 1920s observed: "If we carefully observe the arts today we find a number of tendencies active in all of them, the fine arts as well as all branches of literature, to which only a genuine schizophrenic could do justice."
14. Van Gogh's paintings seem like a bridge spanning inner and outer reality. They also bridge the intellect and emotions in terms of calculated study and integration on the one hand and depth of feeling on the other.
15. Van Gogh stressed the importance of the therapeutic value of painting, describing it as being like a lightning-conductor for his illness.

#### From Chapter VI

1. David Elliott described the intensity of images from an exhibition of work made in psychiatric hospitals as overpowering. He said that a similar intensity and possibility for creativity exists in all of us.
2. The creative process may be linked with the healing process.
3. We are all in this together, so why the divisions, why the them and us approach?
4. Every person is unique, labels may be an over-simplification unable to give little more than a hint of what an individual is really like.
5. An art therapy department may provide an atmosphere of quiet, offering support and encouragement for those wishing to explore the powerful field of subjective emotion through the media of paint, clay and poetry.
6. Art therapy may be valued for a whole range of reasons: It provides inspiration; personal satisfaction; emotional release; an aid to diagnosis, treatment and prognosis, an approach to psychotherapy and a means of assessing clinical progress.
7. The creation of a permissive atmosphere is one of the most



important contributions an artist or art therapist can make.

8. Through painting the patient may regain his sense of identity.
9. Something may be lost as a psychiatric patient 'gets better'. The art may be less imaginative or less dramatic, this is part of the paradox of art therapy.
10. There need not be very clear-cut lines between art therapy and art education.
11. Informality is essential, but there is no standard approach, standardisation would be the death of art.
12. Most patients have had as much criticism as they can take from life. They require reassurance and encouragement before they can express themselves freely. Eventually they may escape from the shadow of other people's assessment of their worth and learn self-evaluation on their own terms.
13. A person may discover different aspects of himself through his art, as with Tony: "This is me pleading for help. This is me feeling imprisoned. This is me - just killed a man."
14. Art therapy may open up avenues and enrich, but it may not be able to offer a complete answer. In the general area of human relationships there are probably few clear-cut answers.
15. Joyce said that in times of stress art had helped her as much as anything, in times of happiness it was a source of delight.
16. The key to treating psychotic patients may be in the atmosphere of the hospital.
17. Art therapy may be somewhat of a problem area: There is the basic difficulty of the overlapping of disciplines; the unending dialogue with art educators; the administrative tangles in relation to occupational therapy departments and sometimes undervaluation within the psychiatric setting. Also it is still in the process of building up its own theoretical framework.
18. The students at Goldsmiths' College conveyed a healthy dislike of hierarchical ways of working.



From Chapter VII

1. For deeper feelings to be discovered periods of solitude and introspection are necessary, says Nina and commenting on her own studio: "Its wonderful to have somewhere of my own to retire to from the distractions of the outside world!"
2. And again: "Please tell me where I am. This is a terrifying place; But its also rather beautiful, this whirling inner space In which I find myself."
3. Teaching easily becomes sterile when it consists of merely giving out the known, without any chance for true growth and development on the part of the teacher.
4. For teaching to be really creative it is necessary for the teacher to be fired with enthusiasm as a result of what the student makes of the experience.
5. Zbigniew's method of working with colour: "I am going to take the purple now and see what that does. Something is happening over here, it could develop given time.... I want to express tonal range. Here is a tonal link - blue, green to purple, a real link. This is going to blend, then something revolutionary is going to happen here!" There is an interesting balance between waiting and watching for developments and deliberate planning and desire.
6. Zbigniew's views on creativity: "Creativity is a complex, constantly changing and elusive process.... tracing and monitoring the creative process may be the most valid method of assessing creativity.
7. "We must examine the media through which Creativity is most effectively manifested."
8. "Creativity could be considered as a hybrid of component ideas. A RESONANCE HYBRID model could postulate many component definitions of Creativity and the average sum of all these ideas could represent Creativity, or the concept could oscillate or resonate between extreme component ideas of Creativity."
9. "The real world is out there to be distorted and differentiated by our fickle, modulating senses."



10. Following the line of spectrum analysis, scales of traits characteristic of the extremities of the creative process may be used in order to recognise degrees of creativity.
11. It is worth-while considering the precursors to moments of intense inspiration.
12. Zbigniew's reference to the experience of reinforced inspiration, mutually shared, underlines the importance of collective creativity in the educational field.
13. Creativity may be most successfully brought out by non-conformist methods of teaching, allowing free reign to the student's own inclinations.
14. Peak experiences and genius are hall-marks of creativity, it remains for each individual to find his own methods.
15. "There might be a paradise of dreams within yourself, so why not take a risk and unlock your own ideas."
16. John speaks of a free imagination, a tendency towards originality, an adventurous nature and the courage to stand outside the main stream of conventions as probably the most important characteristics of a creative person.
17. Exposure to new stimuli and the perceptivity to make use of new experiences are significant factors.
18. "Derailment from the accepted norms of an era is the first step towards creativity and true freedom."
19. The clue to all creative development lies inward, in one's own inner space.
20. Creative people are the beacons in life, they challenge ignorance, apathy and despair.



From Chapter VIII

1. With reference to education; time, flexible schedules and imaginative ideas are all important factors if creativity is to be nurtured. Partial deschooling, informal methods of teaching and lifelong education provide appropriate avenues for radical developments.
2. According to Freire, where banking concepts of education are applied, there is no probing or discovery and students merely become 'copy cats'.
3. Self-directed methods of study help to encourage pupils to be open, creative and free from stereotyped responses.
4. According to Derek Legge, Lifelong education offers a break-away from monolithic, uniform rigid systems.
5. It is a shared view of the founders of the Free International University that creativity is the heart of their approach: "The potential of creativity is of direct social and political relevance and far exceeds the restricted area to which it has traditionally been confined."
6. The Free University's aim is to develop a more organic model of society, bringing creative interpretations to bear on sociological data.
7. Community Arts are concerned with a process of art activity rather than with only a product. The process is to involve the people of a locality in action, not merely 5% but the whole population.
8. Certain experiments in community arts, such as 'Inside Out', may stimulate a dialogue between art college and public.
9. Community Arts aim to break down barriers, enabling people to share and participate.
10. Tagore's advice to Dartington: "The practical work of craftsmen must always be carried out in partnership with the divine spirit of madness, of beauty, with the inspiration of some ideal of perfection..."
11. John Lane on the spell of the arts centre: "The idea of open access, the fluid use of interchangeable spaces, the relaxed mixture of cultures, the informal encouragement of every kind of personal creativity."



## General Conclusions

What then does this thesis demonstrate? Looking at the message carried by the material from the most optimistic angle: Departments of fine art, for example, may be seen as being, or as capable of being, centres of stimulation, offering open structures of flexibility in keeping with the characteristics of the creative process. Art therapy departments in psychiatric clinics and hospitals may be seen as havens of tranquility, and where appropriate, as sanctuaries of dynamic expression also.

The messages from other areas suggest that, the progressive and adventurous elements apparent in modern art education, the signals from micro-technology of the coming 'Age of Leisure' and hints of daring and revolutionary methods of dealing with the total educational situation, all build up to something that might best be described as the significance of 'Space for Growth' or 'Time for Growth'. It is fascinating to observe the mushrooming of community arts, and the way, for example, arts centres are springing up everywhere; as if in readiness for the 'New Age' consciousness referred to at Dartington. Everywhere there are hints that barriers can be broken down, thus enabling truly informal, non-hierarchical and non-authoritarian approaches to reach out towards their full potential.

The idea of partial deschooling - arising from the philosophy of Illich and like minded pioneers - seemed at first to falter in case the opportunity for additional free time for the young might be too devastating in its consequences, especially in the larger cities. But no, not necessarily, community arts and particularly developments such as arts centres, are showing that people are feeling their own way towards the future. They are in the process of finding one of the important answers to suggestions of less



time for formal schooling and shorter working hours for adults. They are implementing the philosophy of lifelong education. What is more, they are discovering answers in an evolutionary way that is really most exciting for those caught up in the drama.

Turning now to the theoretical aspect of the subject, as mentioned particularly in Chapter I, it is interesting to observe how the theory is continuously interweaving with the expression. The creative process appears to require alternating stimulus/incubation situations. Nearly every individual speaking of his or her experiences with reference to creativity, stresses the need for periods of withdrawal and introspection, in order for those intuitive flashes of inspiration to emerge. Research on the human brain is placing increasing emphasis on the importance of the right hemisphere and the total brain (as distinct from merely the left brain functions). This is another way of saying that time must be allowed for those intuitive and synthetic processes to work their magic.

Scientists are reaching out towards imaginative ideas, Carl Sagan, for example, makes the following observation: "In one marijuana experience, my informant became aware of the presence and, in a strange way, the inappropriateness of this silent 'watcher', who responds with interest and occasional critical comment to the kaleidoscopic dream imagery of the marijuana experience but is not part of it. 'Who are you?' my informant silently asked it. 'Who wants to know?' it replied. " This is really pure Zen! "

Physicists are becoming aware of many concepts once thought outside their range of study. They are 'into' inner space and and prepared to understand that Time is Consciousness. Claude Curling for instance is aware of the road between outer and inner



space being blocked, but he is aware of the esoteric wisdom that perhaps it may be opened by love.

Liam Hudson, the psychologist, notes that there is a movement away from the trivial and the artificial in psychology. A movement away from over-concern with such matters as how an octopus distinguishes between a triangle and a square, towards the study of human beings in their free range states. He feels that there is rather less interest in behaviourism and 'block' views on human reactions and more interest in the idiosyncratic and the individual, and often in what may be described as the open-ended and creative. He observes that innovation is not separable from risk and this element of uncertainty contributes to the excitement in art and in science. <sup>2</sup>

Erich Neumann is aware of the importance of both involvement and risk: "Every transformative or creative process comprises stages of possession. To be moved, captivated, spell-bound, signify to be possessed by something; and without such a fascination and the emotional tension connected with it, no concentration, no lasting interest, no creative process, are possible. Every possession can justifiably be interpreted either as a one-sided narrowing or an intensification and deepening. The exclusivity and radicality of such 'possession' represent both an opportunity and a danger. But no great achievement is possible if one does not accept this risk." <sup>3</sup>

Returning to the main theme of this particular thesis, it is apparent that art colleges, art teaching departments, art therapy departments and arts centres may - at their best - all provide a clue, in an embryonic way, to certain patterns for the future of human society as a whole. They offer a hint, along with other factors and influences, of a kind of society



in which concern with the significance of the flow of creative ideas is seen as more important than material luxuries and sympathy for the human predicament means more than status and power.

Perhaps, as this thesis is in many ways dedicated to students, the last word should go to a minstrel student: Zbigniew Jarzecki writes of "a bold venture" and "An empathic voyage" and of "A peak experience, crashing through the bounds of all dimension." It is somewhere along the line between the venture, the experience and its expression that creativity emerges and re-emerges endlessly.

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No. words 114,000 approx.



Transcending Turbulent Dimensions

Poignant, pigmented, psychedelic skies  
 Merge with glistening turbulent waves  
 Whirling blue-velvet tides  
 Sweep across beckoning terrestrial capes  
 Swirling red-scarlet streams  
 Carve out nature's fossil dreams.

Sombre ripples spread their magic phantoms deep  
 Projecting the inner soul's reflected fears  
 Sacred, inconspicuous ocean beds weep  
 Unfolding secret dark tonal tears  
 Unveiling an exotic blend of dazzling chromatic themes  
 Upholding a spectrum of screaming colour schemes.

A giant rocky wonderland ponders  
 A solitary pondlet wanders  
 Nebulous clouds drift and roll  
 Adamant glaciers encroach and take hold  
 Gushing torrents parade with frantic ease  
 Sedate terrestrial life seems to ooze or cease  
 With the rustling resourceful river breeze  
 A fermenting, yet reticent, fantasy world bleeds.

Mystical, magical, migrating sea of life  
 Reveals yearning passion and lilting sensuality  
 Evokes pure expressionism, intensity and strife  
 Recaptures the vivid, ecstatic moments of precious individuality;  
 A bold venture, an empathic voyage into abstraction  
 Distills ambiguous hints of daunting reality  
 Invokes a dynamic surgence of restless ideality  
 A peak experience, crashing through the bounds of all dimension.

And nature's natural colour patterns shriek!  
 Red, yellow, blue the primary givers  
 Orange, green, purple the secondary takers  
 Tones and shades oscillate from light to dark  
 Vibrating rhythms pervade, bold shapes protrude  
 Harmony, achieved by graceful interpositions,  
 Artfully balances the individuals prolific explorations  
 The human condition eclipsed, in a synthesis of assimilated  
 inner visions.



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## Appendix

### Art Therapy

Between 1965-67 questionnaires were sent to 190 psychiatric hospitals in Britain and replies were received from 144 of them. Over 60% of these hospitals said they arranged art sessions of some kind. However, only about one third of the psychiatric hospitals arranging art therapy had full-time studios, and the majority of these were in the south of England.

There is likely to have been an increase in art therapy since the mid 1960s, especially as there are now opportunities for post-graduate courses for people practising or wishing to specialise in the subject. The north of England is still behind the south in this respect: The Deputy Manager of a new psychiatric day centre in Leeds, Tessa Daley, says in a Newsletter: "I am very interested in promoting Art Therapy in the North. There is a desperate lack of any type of creative therapy, particularly using art. I welcome the Regional Groups of BAAT and see this as the only way to consolidate as well as encourage the use of arts in therapy." (1979).

### Art Education

#### Personal Experience with reference to G.C.E. Examinations

##### Results with Mature Students - 1968 - 1975

Ordinary level passes; 100/130, 77% approx.

Advanced level passes: 50/60, 83% approx. ( 7 given O level, 3 Failures).

12 students did A level without O level: 7 passed, 4 given the O level & 1 failed.

Results of examinations: on balance mainly as expected, A level four noticeably higher and four noticeably lower than was anticipated.



### Suggested Criteria for Creativity in the Visual Arts

This is a subjective and highly personal matter. Not every characteristic is necessarily applicable to any one piece of work. However, within an art studio, the range of products at a given time is likely to satisfy most of the following criteria, if the term creative is to be justified.

1. Originality: Work that is strikingly unusual and personal.
2. Visual Impact: The haunting quality of imaginative power.
3. Rhythm: The qualities of life, vitality and movement.
4. Harmony: Relationship, balance and integration.
5. Colour and/or Tone - a perceptive feeling and appreciation.
6. Texture - appropriate surface treatment and elaboration.
7. Form and/or Depth.
8. Interpretation: Imaginative translation into visual language.
9. Exploitation: The development of an idea or theme.
10. Technique: A sensitive and appropriate use of the media.

These basic elements may be described as the language of art. Beyond these rather classical, aesthetic qualities there may be something more difficult to convey in words - feeling. In romantic and expressionist art there may be a desire to transcend all exterior reality and reveal the depth and mystery of the interior world: love, pain, joy, anguish or wonder.